

THE POETASTER IN SOCIETY:
THE LIFE AND WORKS OF HENRY LOK

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ABSTRACT

Henry Lok, a sixteenth century poet who wrote one of the first divine sonnet sequences in English, has been poorly served by the critics. Most, perhaps disheartened by the sheer bulk and uncertain quality of his work, have been content to dismiss him out of hand. An exception is J. J. Scanlon who, in his investigation of 200 of the divine sonnets, recognizes Lok's affinity to many poets of his time.

This biography, in discussing Lok's poetry as it relates to his experiences as a courtier, intelligencer, and devout Puritan, discovers a close link between his works and Lok's view of himself as a Protestant Renaissance gentleman.

The result is a recognition that the biographical details in Lok's poetry are of historical interest, while his enthusiastic use of the poetic fashions of his age make him a modest but not unworthy torch-bearer for later and more talented poets.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The stimulation and help I received from my thesis advisor can best be expressed in a dedicatory sonnet in the style of Henry Lok:

To an exigent mentor and kind friend, David McKeen, Esq.

To take a modest man unknown, unsung,
And to unlock what makes a Lok to sing;
To trace the lines of his poetic tongue
And from unmeaning method, method wring,
For student in low degree t'was not an easy thing.
But with encouragement both kind and keen,
Accumulated wisdom to my aid you'd bring
Whenever thoughts were sparse and hard to glean.
From which largesse (with neither let nor lien)
I gathered sustenance and strength anew
Until my scattered notions did convene,
To write a thesis now well overdue,
With aid from you Imagination soared
Accept then this, the fruit of our concord.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to my husband for putting up with Henry Lok so patiently for so long. Finally I wish to thank my thesis typist, Mrs. Joyce Granich, whose efficiency and understanding despite a swiftly approaching deadline has been greatly appreciated.

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INTRODUCTION

For I likewise haue wasted much good time,
Still wayting to preferment vp to cline,
Whilist others alwayes haue before me stept,
And from my beard the fat away haue swept:

Spenser, Mother Hubberds Tale 75-78

The memories of school days leave us with a composite picture of the court of Elizabeth the First. History, literature, and myth combine to blend factual and legendary events: Raleigh's cloak spread before his queen; Drake finishing his game of bowls before going out to defeat the Armada; Sidney, the emblematic courtier, performing a supreme act of charity as he lay dying. The jumble of images emphasizes the glorious and the gorgeous; the less admirable features common to any age fade into the background. Even the great religious and political contentions of the century, because they were generally resolved in England's favour, add to the air of glamour surrounding the time.

The cynosure of the age was undoubtedly Elizabeth herself. Perhaps by necessity, after thirty years of religious fluctuation, a fixed star was in order. There is no doubt that she held the allegiance of the vast majority of her subjects for most of the years of her long reign. J. E. Neale mentions "the romantic attachment of these ardent Englishmen to their Queen" when he quotes one

George Ireland, member of Parliament, saying: "It makes my heart leap for joy to think we have such a jewel. It makes all my joints to tremble for fear when I consider the loss of such a jewel."¹ The setting for this jewel was the court, and it was the place where fortune might be won or lost. To it came the scions of noble families, the nouveaux-riche upstarts fattened on the spoils of monastery lands, merchant adventurers, gentlemen pirates, and gentlemen poets. They form a phalanx around the queen and amongst them, perhaps in his youth pressing forward with other aspiring minds, certainly in latter days a shadowy figure waiting in the corridors of power for the attention of his patron, was the subject of this biography, Henry Lok, minor poet and Cecil agent.

At first sight Henry Lok seems an odd choice as the central figure in an Elizabethan literary biography. Much of his life is unrecorded; his unsuccessful career was not even buttressed by wealth, neither did he marry a fortune nor make one. Though he had native intelligence he was no great wit, and much of his poetry is more an example of his ability to absorb the fashionable whims of his time than a testimony to any literary skill. And yet, in many respects, the elements that combine to make up Henry Lok's religious beliefs, political career, and literary

¹J. E. Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments, 2 volumes (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953-57), II, 50.

aspirations are typical of many men who aspired to greatness in the brave new world of Elizabethan England, and failed in the attempt. The insecurity of life at the top in the sixteenth century has been well recorded, but the examples tend to be drawn from famous lives. We are aware that Spenser had money problems, but somehow the glory of the poetry casts in its own golden glow; the exploits of a Drake, the vaulting ambition and plummeting fall of an Essex tend to throw the picture of their lives out of balance and therefore distort them. They are larger than life, symbolic figures in an historical painting slotted into place as courtier poet, princely pirate, and political prodigal. There is no such problem with Henry Lok. In comparison to the great failure of an Essex his was the little failure of a common man who, like so many others, wanted desperately to be uncommon. Nobody, except his immediate family who were most affected, paid much attention to his dwindling economic resources, or to his loss of favour at court. His patrons probably placed his pleading letters in the pile with so many others received that day. He would be paid a pittance in recognition of past services when his turn came. In short, Henry Lok was expendable, and it is as such that this biography will view him. The words that Arthur Miller wrote to describe another expendable figure may help to set the tone of this work:

... he's a human being and a terrible thing is happening to him. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog -- attention, attention must finally be paid to such a person.

Between these unsuccessful men, however, there is an important difference, for Henry Lok was not beset by the problem that Willy Loman's wife diagnoses in her husband. Lok always knew who he was, and his Puritan belief in his own election to eternal identity buoyed him up and enabled him to survive with equanimity of spirit if not fullness of purse his troubled passage through his sea of troubles. The world may equate his life with failure, he certainly did not.

The general division of the work is as follows:

Lok's Puritan childhood; his career as an agent for Lord Burghley and Sir Robert Cecil; and finally, a discussion of his poetry as it relates to his life and times. The main problem with the first part of the biography is, as mentioned before, a lack of material on his early life. We know of his ancestry, and thanks to the work of Patrick Collinson, his mother has taken her place as a minor figure in history. We know he had a university education, but as to early schooling there is no record. There is, however, his poetry, which despite the conventional conceits and disclaimers of his age, contains obviously genuine biographical details. And there are the letters in the Cecil and various other archives of state papers which tell of his tasks in the political underworld of espionage and

counter-intelligence. The later letters depict in almost Dickensian style the decline of his fortune after a lifetime spent in the service of the state.

Faced with this imbalance of material, a scarcity at the beginning of his life and an abundance for the last twenty odd years, I have been forced to adopt two different attitudes towards my subject. In the early years, the emphasis will be upon people and places that played a part in forming the person of Henry Lok. His mother looms large, and "Godly Master" Dering, who was his step-father for a brief period, takes his place as an important influence. London, the centre of the political, literary, and mercantile life of the time, had been the home of the Lok family for at least three generations, and Henry Lok spent his early childhood there; it too will be described and discussed. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge (Lok went to both), were undergoing important changes at this time and these will be noted and commented on. Thus, in the first part of the work, Henry Lok himself will tend to be an archetypal rather than a real figure. He will be seen as an example upon whom the influences, the manners and mores of his time worked to create the middleclass man who emerges in the latter half of the biography.

Through the letters we shall meet the hard-working, conscientious public servant, to whom the wheel of fortune denied the modest reward which was his due. The poetry

divides itself into two main parts: a collection of dedicatory sonnets, which in style and content do not compare badly with others written at the time; and the religious poetry. The latter divides again into Biblical translations, metrical psalms, and what Lily Campbell calls "the longest sonnet sequence of them all."² This is a series of over two hundred divine sonnets of "Christian Passions" and "Peculiar Prayers." Their tone is that especially Puritan amalgam of spiritual obsequiousness and spiritual self-confidence and they are witness to what was the principal unifying element in Henry Lok's political and poetical careers, his deep religious faith. Puritanism was the lodestar of his life's journey towards eternity. Even when most harassed by debt and loss of favour at Court, he sees himself within a Biblical setting. He is, for example, the down-trodden Israelite awaiting an end to his bondage when he writes to Lord Salisbury asking for help, "if therefore God has ordained you to be my Joseph in this dearth of Egypt."³ But the Promised Land which is not of this world was Henry Lok's ultimate vision. It gave him that surging spiritual self-confidence which sustained him throughout his life. As Douglas Bush comments: "If the Calvinist

²L. Campbell, Divine Poetry and Drama in 16th Century England (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), pp. 131-32.

³Lok to R. earl of Salisbury, 14 January 1604/5 (HMC Salisbury Papers), XVII, 12.

religion had its dark and terrifying side, it also raised the humblest of the elect above the lords of the earth."⁴

Thus, finally, Henry Lok takes his place in this biography as himself: a middleclass man of modest means whose little life illuminates the darker corners of Elizabeth's Court, and whose minor literary talent, extended by faith, provides us with a commonplace book containing many of the poetic attitudes, fads, and styles of the time.

And now two technical notes. First, on the spelling of the Lok name. The orthographic vagaries of the age variously wrote it Locke, Lock, or Lok. I have arbitrarily chosen the latter spelling and will use it (except when I quote from the work of scholars who differ from me on this point) for all members of the family when I refer to them. Second, the use of the word "Puritan" which has already been scattered with too much prodigality upon these pages. Even Basil Hall, in his carefully researched article on the subject, is unable to define a precise meaning for this term.⁵ Indeed, by informing the reader of its many attributes and nuances throughout the time when Protestantism was being both religiously and politically established in England, he illustrates the difficulties inherent in using the word

⁴D. Bush, English Literature in the Earlier 17th Century (1945; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 4.

⁵B. Hall, "Puritanism: the Problem of Definition," Studies in Church History II, ed. G. Cuming (1965), pp. 285-296.

"Puritan" without attempting to discuss both its denotative and connotative functions during these years. He begins with Stow's use of it in 1563 as a direct term of abuse. He continues with Thomas Fuller who, in 1564, poured scorn on those who used it loosely because it was "odious" to the godly, and to those members of the clergy who could not in conscience accept the authority of the state-appointed bishops, and too comprehensive to cover the many different forms of dissent -- ranging from heresy, to those who wanted to live a "pure and holy" life, to those whose only guide was their own conscience -- which the religious and political spectrum contained. Hall continues by enumerating the various sects which, willy-nilly, have been classified as Puritan by scholars and historians at some time or other: the Brownists, Separatists, Barrowists, Anabaptists, Quakers, Levellers, Ranters and Independents of all sorts. He discusses the religious and political differences within these groups which range all the way from an innocent love of going to church to hear a good sermon, to outright rebellion and treason. He then attempts a first tentative definition of the troublesome term:

For the years 1570 to 1640 surely the position is clear enough: Puritan is the regular word for those clergymen and laymen of the established Church of England whose attitude ranged from the tolerably conformable to the downright obstreperous, and to those who sought to presbyterianise that church from within.⁶

⁶Hall, pp. 293-94.

It is within these very elastic confines that I place Henry Lok when I call him a Puritan. We shall see that, though he had a tender and exigent conscience, his career as a servant of the state caused him to be more than "tolerably conformable" to the established religion of his country. One more quotation from Basil Hall's article will, I think, further qualify both Henry Lok's and his mother's "place" within the Puritan tradition. As a final summation on the difficulty of a concise definition, Hall says:

Finally, a frequently overlooked dimension in Puritanism ... is its profound concern with 'casuistry', that is the study of 'cases of conscience', including the preaching of sermons upon these "cases".⁷

Here I think we have an essential element in the make-up of both Loks. In the correspondence between John Knox and Anne Lok we shall see that, during the time when Knox and his Scottish followers were overthrowing Catholic altars, burning vestments, and generally trying to establish Calvinism as the state religion of Scotland, she was most importunate in her desire for counsel on matters of conscience concerning the new English Prayer Book and the methodology of the ceremony of baptism. More important perhaps to a discussion of casuistry, Knox took the time to answer her queries.⁸ Similarly, all of Henry Lok's divine sonnets may be loosely classified as little sermons on the

⁷Hall, p. 296.

⁸See pp. 26-27.

relationship between God and his elect, while the casuistic element is particularly evident in his sequence called "Sundry Affectionate Sonets of a feeling Conscience."

Thus, fully cognizant of the pitfalls awaiting the unwary writer who too lavishly applies the term "Puritan" to people and opinions, I can only promise to be sparing in my use of it. And when I cannot avoid naming it, I will be careful to hedge it with precise and particular qualifications.

PART I: THE PURITAN ROOTS

Hearth and Home

Who so shall duly consider the whole progresse of man's estate from life to death, shall find it (gentle Reader) to be nothing else but a very pilgrimage through this Earth to another world

Henry Lok, Epistle "To the Christian Reader,"
Sundry Christian Passions.

Though it is possible to trace his ancestry in both paternal and maternal lines, there is no exact date of birth for Henry Lok himself. We lack the same information about many more important people of the period as well, because, though Thomas Cromwell ordered the keeping of registers of births, marriages and deaths in every parish in 1538, the system did not begin to work effectively until late in the century. However, knowing that his father's family had lived in London for at least three generations, we can presume that he too was born there. Other incidents in his life help us to narrow down the actual date to the early 1550s. For example, it is probable that he was the "little Harrie" who travelled to Geneva with his mother in 1557. It is also probable that he is the Henry Lok who matriculated from St. John's College, Cambridge in 1569 (where he is referred to as the third son of Henry Lok, Mercer).¹

¹J. and J. A. Venn, Alumni Cantabrigienses (Cambridge University Press, 1934), III, 97.

More concrete evidence is found in Sonnet VII of Lok's own Sundry Sonnets of Christian Passions (first published in 1593), whose first lines state:

Lame of my limmes, and sencelesse of my state,
Neere fortie yeares Lord haue I groveling line,
Before Bethesda poole,

This would seem to suggest a birthdate of around 1553 and is the one given in DNB, albeit with a question mark. Lok's paternal ancestry can be traced back to Thomas Lok who died in 1507 and is described as a mercer.² Thomas's son, William, who followed his father's trade, was a solid citizen: an alderman, sheriff of London, and of special service to Henry VIII as his personal mercer and agent abroad. We are told that while in Dunkirk on business in 1533 he pulled down the papal bull excommunicating Henry VIII. We do not know which of the two most likely motivating forces for this act, patriotism and a belief in the reformed religion, was uppermost in his mind at the time. However, the King rewarded him with one hundred pounds a year and made him a gentleman of the privy chamber. Amongst Sir William Lok's many children by two of his four wives were Michael Lok, merchant, explorer, and devotee of the new geography, and Henry, another mercer, and father of the subject of this work.

Henry Lok's mother's family also shared mercantile

²All information from DNB, article by Sidney Lee, XII, 93, unless otherwise stated.

and Protestant roots. His maternal grandfather, Stephen Vaughan, himself the son of a mercer, was a member of the company of Merchant Adventurers and had business interests in Flanders.³ He appears to have adopted Protestantism as early as 1529 and it seems that John Hutton, governor of the Merchant Adventurers' Company, brought charges of heresy against him before the bishop of London and Sir Thomas More. Collinson says of Vaughan's dispatches that they "show an utterly untheological mind predisposed to heresy, and one understands why he was regarded with enduring suspicion by Sir Thomas More."⁴ However, despite his religious principles, his career was crowned with worldly success. Various offices with monetary perquisites came his way, including a clerkship in chancery, under-treasurer of the mint, and governor of the Merchant Adventurers of Bergen. Two years before his death in 1549, he was returned as member of Parliament for Lancaster. His daughter, Anne, of whom more later, was Henry Lok's mother.

Thus we can see that both the Lok and the Vaughan families had put down strong roots in the Protestant and mercantile worlds. Though in a society in flux where an outmoded feudalism, humanism, and nascent capitalism were

³Again all information from DNB, article by A. F. Pollard, XX, 179-180, unless otherwise stated.

⁴P. Collinson, "The Role of Women in the English Reformation," Studies in Church History II, ed. G. Cuming (1965), p. 262.

still jockeying for place Protestantism and commercial enterprise were still uneasy allies, nevertheless belief in the reformed religion can be seen as a natural outcome of certain business interests. The travel involved in mercantile dealings early proved to be the catalyst which, by bringing traders in contact with the ideas of the European reformers, caused so many English merchants to sympathize with Protestantism even before Henry VIII found it expedient to adopt his own version of it as the faith of England. Thus both the Lok and the Vaughan families were in the vanguard of what Collinson calls a "highly significant process of conversion going forward steadily in the thirties and forties."⁵ Both families can also be seen as charter members of the new self-confident middle class, having undergone the long apprenticeship which L. B. Wright refers to when he says:

The Elizabethan bourgeoisie did not spring full-grown from the head of some mercantile Jove, but its foundations had been laid in the slow commercial development of England since the thirteenth century, when the wool and cloth trade with Flanders and the wine trade with Bordeaux had started a business expansion which rapidly swelled in the 16th and 17th centuries until its ramifications approached in complexity modern commercialism.⁶

Thus Henry Lok the elder, and his wife, Anne Vaughan, came into a heritage which included a respected and recognized

⁵Collinson, p. 262.

⁶L. B. Wright, Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1935), p. 5.

place in society and, perhaps more important, those fresh and confident religious beliefs that gave Puritans of all stamps what Knappen calls "an unshakable faith in the soundness of their own position."⁷ They must have entertained high hopes for their children, including the father's name sake. But these were dreams that awaited uncertain fulfillment, for at the actual time of his birth the people who comprised Henry Lok's immediate family and social circle were lying low before the wind of anti-Protestant suppression begun in the reign of Mary.

As befitted their indispensability in the economic scheme of things, lying low was often all that was required of merchants, and Henry Lok senior seems to have survived the Marian years without undue strain. He appears to have been stationed at Antwerp during this time where he may have assisted Thomas Wood (described as his servant) when, as a refugee from Marian persecution, he and William Whittingham stayed there prior to going to Frankfurt.⁸ However, some of the English gentry's more important families who had taken an uncompromisingly Protestant stance in the past found it prudent to leave England and wait in Geneva for better days. It is at this point that Anne Lok comes

⁷M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (1939; rpt. Phoenix Books, 1965), p. 380.

⁸C. Garrett, The Marian Exiles (Cambridge: The University Press, 1966), p. 343.

to the fore and takes her place as a vital influence in the life of her son. For she too went to Geneva, not as a Marian exile, but at the urgings of John Knox himself. Before discussing this odd adventure we should perhaps back-track a little and place Anne Lok in perspective.

Before she was reintroduced to the public by Patrick Collinson as the subject of his monograph "The Role of Women in the English Reformation illustrated by the Life and Friendships of Anne Locke," Anne Lok had more or less faded into the obscurity reserved for minor historical figures. It is true that Grosart, who in his introduction to the works of Henry Lok first identifies her as his wife, repairs the error in his epilogue [sic] by stating not only that she was Lok's mother, but also that she translated in 1560 certain sermons by Calvin into English.⁹ However, he does not pursue the subject further. Similarly, D. M. Stenton, in her 1957 study of women prominent in English history, finds Anne interesting enough to mention her as an example of an educated middle-class woman of Puritan stock. She unwittingly also makes further reference to her by alluding to her "Of the markes of the children of God, and their comfort in afflictions," of which she remarks "the translator was named Anne Prowse, of whom nothing seems to

⁹A. B. Grosart, Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies' Library (1871; rpt. New York: Ams Press, Inc., 1970), II, 395.

be known."¹⁰ Finally, Patrick Collinson sets the record straight. He identifies Anne Prowse as Anne Lok née Vaughan, and gathers together the known details of her life. In the article he first of all brings forward evidence to support a theory that women, because of their "natural propensities" for everything from holiness and pity to gossip, were instrumental in the spread of Protestantism in England. He then suggests that Anne Lok is an important example of these distaff members of the elect. We will now take up her story as it fits into the larger framework of the narrative of Henry Lok's life. We start with her relationship with John Knox.

It is significant that the mature Henry Lok's earliest memory may well have been the experience of the long and uncomfortable journey to Switzerland which his mother took at the urging of her spiritual mentor, John Knox.¹¹ These plans are well documented in a series of letters from Knox to Anne. She first appears as one of the

¹⁰ D. M. Stenton, The English Woman in History (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.), p. 136.

¹¹ The journey took a month to six weeks according to Garrett, Marian Exiles, p. 9. Because Miss Garrett's "Census of Exiles" is composed of men's names only, Anne Lok's name does not appear on it. (Even the Duchess of Suffolk, who was higher in rank than her husband, and whose ostentatious exit from England surrounded by a retinue of servants, was obviously known to the authorities, is listed next to her husband; Richard Bertie, merely as "wife", p. 87). Miss Garrett, however, does mention en passant that Anne Lok was an exile in Geneva (p. 293).

Scottish reformer's correspondents in December 1556 when he writes to urge her and a Mistress Hickman¹² "to flie the present idolatrie;" he prudently adds that they must do so with the "consall and discretioun of thois that God hath apoyntit to your heidis" (your husbandis I meane).¹³ Biblical comparisons of the women to Lot in the middle of Sodom may have added a sense of spiritual urgency to his appeals, but to Anne Lok alone he addresses more cogently personal reasons. In November 1556 he writes from Geneva:

Deir Sister, yf I suld expres the thirst and langoure whilk I haif had for your presence, whilk I assure yow is so deir to me, that gif the charge of this litill flock heir, ... did not impeid me, my presence sud prevent my letter.¹⁴

In December 1556 he refers to the presence of his wife and mother-in-law in Geneva somewhat obliquely when he writes of himself as "now burdenit with dowbill cairies," and adds, "pleas God to gyd and conduct your self to this plate."¹⁵ She arrived with Harrie and her daughter, Anne, on May 8th,

¹²In Athenae Cantabrigienses, ed. C. H. & T. Cooper (1858; rpt. Bell & Daldy, 1967), II, 232, there is listed an Anthony Hickman described as the "fourth son of Anthony Hickman, esq., of Woodford Hall, Essex, by his wife, Rose, daughter of Sir William Lock" The date of Hickman's B. A. is given as 1579 which would make him a few years younger than Henry Lok. Given the dates, it does seem possible that the Mrs. Hickman referred to by Knox was Anne Lok's relative by marriage.

¹³The Works of John Knox, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: James Thin, 1895), IV, 219.

¹⁴Works, IV, 238.

¹⁵Works, IV, 239.

1557. On arrival at Geneva, little Anne died,¹⁶ so that it was Harrie alone who spent two years with his mother in "the maist perfyte scholle of Chryst that ever was in erth since the dayis of the Apostillis."¹⁷

Though only between three and five years old at the time, the memory of living in that exotic little spiritual world must have sunk deep into the consciousness of Henry Lok and formed a solid religious ballast which kept him steady during the vicissitudes of his journey through life. A more worldly advantage was the fact that at Geneva his mother had the opportunity to meet and perhaps become the intimate of some Puritan families who would have an important role to play in the Court and Parliaments of Elizabeth, such people as the Killigrews, the Berties, the Knollyses, and the Careys. Though not all of these people actually went to Geneva, there is no doubt that the shared experience of exile in Europe must have initiated ties which we know endured throughout Lok's life. For example, while in Geneva Anne Lok translated Calvin's sermons on the song of Hezekiah from Isaiah XXXVIII and dedicated the work to Catherine Bertie, duchess of Suffolk.¹⁸ Many years later the son born to the Berties during their sojourn on the Continent,

¹⁶ Works, IV, 239.

¹⁷ Works, IV, 240.

¹⁸ Collinson, "The Role of Women," p. 265.

Peregrine Bertie, would be honoured by Henry Lok with a dedicatory sonnet which implies long years of friendship and favours from both the parents and the son. Similarly, Sir Henry Killigrew, who would later become a respected member of Elizabeth's Court and a benefactor of Emmanuel College, is also the recipient of a dedicatory sonnet. On the distaff side, Lady Margaret Hoby, nee Carey, would receive a sonnet which, at least covertly, refers to an acquaintanceship of long standing. Among the sons of notable exiles to whom Lok addressed sonnets are Sir William Knollys, and Sir William Russell. Equally important to Lok's future were the merchants and landed gentry from the west of England who formed a sizable proportion of the exiles. Some may even have been part of a group that in later years would so far forget its regional bias as to sign a petition for Lok to be given a sinecure in Exeter.¹⁹ Thus little Harrie may well have been noticed and guided, but we know never "cockered",²⁰ by people who would be in a position to help him when he came to Court some fifteen years later, and who would prove to be friends in the latter

¹⁹Cf. p. 97.

²⁰The word "cocker" according to the OED means to indulge, pamper, or excessively spoil a person, especially a child. It seems to have been a favourite word in Puritan circles and will reappear in this work (Cf. pp. 30, 167).

part of his life when he needed them most. But the English communities at Geneva and Frankfurt were artificial creations born of religious persecution, and though the heady experience of the refugees must have provided topics of conversation in the Loks' immediate circle for many years to come, the actual experiment ended soon after the proclamation of Elizabeth as Queen in 1558. Anne Lok and her son returned to England in late 1559, and immediately entered the hot-house atmosphere of the new reign.

To many people in the reformed church the death of Mary must have seemed like the direct intervention of the hand of God to protect English Protestantism. The accession of Elizabeth was therefore viewed by all Protestants, and particularly by the reform wing, as an opportunity to rebuild the country in their own image. Elizabeth herself certainly had other and more pressing problems: the need to hold together a dangerously divided and religiously confused populace; the necessity of preventing any immediate, direct confrontation with continental, Scottish, and Irish adversaries; above all, perhaps, the imperative of ensuring her own survival. To the returning exiles and the reformers who had survived the Marian years in England, on the other hand, affairs of state were secondary, and to a large extent complementary to their main aim. They came back to make England the promised land, and to rebuild Jerusalem in London. Order,

they thought, would follow naturally, and their domestic and foreign enemies would be confounded if only the Queen would set up a community of saints on England's soil.

This is no place for a detailed description of the workings of the first Elizabethan Parliament of 1559, or of the various acts and measures of succeeding Parliaments that alternately exhilarated or depressed the more visionary of the saints.²¹ Suffice it to say that though there was a "vital core of twelve and perhaps sixteen returned exiles in the new house,"²² and though empty ecclesiastical places were filled by returning Marian exiles, the exigencies of power imposed a degree of pragmatism on some of the most radical members of Parliament. Balanced legislation was the order of the day. The Act of Supremacy, with its emphasis on the Queen as supreme spiritual and temporal head, was aimed at any Catholics tempted to look elsewhere for a replacement for Elizabeth. The Act of Uniformity, prohibiting any forms of service except those found in the Book of Common Prayer, hit at Puritan custom. But the essence of the via media that Elizabeth was making her Parliament tread is contained in the preamble to the communion service in the new Prayer Book.

²¹For a complete account, see J. E. Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments, 2 volumes (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953-57).

²²Neale, I, 57.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul into everlasting life; and take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thine own heart by faith, with thanksgiving.

The first part of this convoluted sentence implies a real presence and was aimed both at satisfying those who came later to be known as high Anglicans, and wavering Catholics who might be won over; the second part follows Swiss doctrine and it was hoped that Puritan eyes would light on it and be satisfied. However, though Elizabeth herself may have viewed these balanced dichotomies as a form of compromise that would be tolerated if not always welcomed, the more radical of the elect were even less satisfied. Concentrated action against disliked legislation was prevented, however, primarily by the personality of the Queen herself: her skill in manipulating her people and her Parliaments was unsurpassed and improved with practise.

Neale makes the point that she was generally not blamed in person for the lack of progress towards a more perfect Protestantism and calls this "a tribute to the art by which she concealed or offset the less popular features of her rule."²³ A second reason for a lack of concerted action was that the Puritans were divided amongst themselves. The Marian exiles had been factious enough abroad and had partially resolved their problems only by dividing into two

²³Neale, I, 84.

camps, one at Frankfurt, led by Doctor Richard Cox, the other at Geneva, led by John Knox. Puritans of all stripes therefore had to decide which kind of reform they wanted: the Coxian view that there should be a truly English church based on the reforms of the reign of Edward VI, or the Knoxian view which preferred the extreme Calvinist perspective. Thus, by the time concentrated and unified action against disliked aspects of the legislation of Elizabeth's first Parliaments was launched, many of them, and the social and ideological changes that laws can sometimes effect, had become faits accomplis.

In the Lok household, meanwhile, Anne Lok was receiving a first-hand account from Knox of his own progress in setting up Calvinism in Scotland. A letter of June 23rd, 1559 tells of his followers having put "equall with the ground ... places of idolatrie of Gray and Black Friars," an act of destruction that seems to have convinced "men of Discretion" to persuade Queen Marie de Guise to test Knox's offer "to serve the Authoritie ... in all things not plainlie repugning to God, to his commandement and glorie." She, however, reneged on her promise and soon masses were being said again, albeit on a "dycing table" because, as Knox tells Anne, "ye sall understand all the altars were prophaned."²⁴ Letters in October and November

²⁴ Knox, Works, VI, 22-24.

of 1559 tell of set-backs and of trusting too much "in our owne strenth." He then asks for money "to keepe souldiours and our companie together."²⁵ In going to Anne Lok for monetary aid, Knox was not merely approaching a dear friend but a woman who had access to the sort of people normally prepared to give to the Puritan cause. In 1553 a committee of "Ways and Means" had been organized in London to support the Marian exiles. It consisted of twenty-six influential and wealthy men and women who were known as "sustainers."²⁶ Five of the members were merchants, one of whom was Richard Springham, executor of the will of Lady Lok, Anne's mother-in-law, and later to be associated with Michael Lok, brother of Anne's husband.²⁷ Furthermore, in the new world of Elizabethan Protestantism, influential businessmen were leaving money to be invested at three and a half percent to be used to support Puritan preachers who had no other stipend.²⁸ Money was therefore available, and Anne Lok knew where to get it. However, by December 1559, Knox had his answer and it was a refusal. One may guess at some of the reasons for the lack of aid from the godly merchants to

²⁵Works, IV, 100.

²⁶Garrett, p. 7.

²⁷Garrett, pp. 292-293.

²⁸P. Seaver, The Puritan Lectureships (Stanford: University Press, 1970), p. 76.

Knox. Perhaps the first was based on simple nationalism: both a fear of the money falling into the wrong hands, and a barely acknowledged dislike of all Scots in general. Another would be plainly economic; Christina Garrett suggests that the original Christian charity of the "Ways and Means" committee was not uninfluenced by hopes of unimpeded trade in a settled world.²⁹ But both Knox's followers and their enemies were creating chaos in Scotland which was totally inimical to peaceful commerce and then as ever there was no point in throwing good money away. Perhaps too the merchants preferred the less violent contest taking place in England. Certainly they did not want to invite unwelcome attention by openly supporting Knox. They were well aware that the Queen herself loathed him because of his attack on women rulers in his First Blast of a Trumpet. Finally, we may hazard a guess that in the Lok home Anne's long-suffering husband may have had personal worries about Knox goading Anne into behaving imprudently. She had already asked his advice on two of the notorious conscience-stretchers for Puritans of the time: the taking of communion according to the new Prayer Book, and the propriety of the wearing of the surplice by Protestant ministers. In his ambiguous answer Knox had suggested that "we ought not to justifie with our presence such mingle mangle as now

²⁹Garrett, p. 7.

is commaunded in your kirks." However, he notes that, as he had not seen the new Prayer Book, he could not give her precise instructions except to remember that "nothing ought to be used that the Lord Jesus hath not sanctified, nather by precept nor by practise."³⁰ So Knox did not get his money, the merchants preferring to win souls by paying for proselytizers rather than iconoclasts.

The behaviour of Knox and his followers illustrates one of the great problems of Puritan dialectic: the dichotomy between their projected aims and the actual results of their actions. For instance, in the midst of the orgy of altar smashing, defrocking of friars, and burning of vestments and statuary, Knox could write to Anne, "we meane no tumult, no alteratioun of authoritie, but onlie the reformation of religioun, and suppressing of idolatrie."³¹ Even in the English Parliament, where their methods were non-violent, the Puritan aim of cleansing the Anglican church from within seemed too often to depend on a diminution of the power of the Throne. Thus, though Puritans may have believed that they were reformers, their actions made them revolutionaries. As Walzer says, "In politics as in religion the saints were opposition men and their primary

³⁰Knox, Works, VI, 83-84.

³¹Works, 30.

task was the destruction of traditional order."³² These contraries were never fully reconciled, not even when Puritan reform became Puritan revolution in the seventeenth century. However, two areas where the paradox of aims and results had a salutary effect were in the home and in education, and it is to these subjects, and particularly to their influence on the young Henry Lok, that I now turn.

Home and School

Better Unborne than Untaught

Well-known Elizabethan proverb³³

Elizabethan England is justly famous for its learned women. The Queen herself gave the lead being fluent in several languages. At the age of eleven one of her exercises was to translate "The Mirrour or glas of the sinful Soul" from French into English; years later she would take leave of Cambridge University with a Latin oration.³⁴ She was a poet; she played several musical instruments; above all she showed a knowledge of the intricacies and latent power of the vernacular which places her in the vanguard of those who wanted English to take its place as

³²M. Walzer, The Revolution of the Saints (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 3.

³³Quoted by M. St. Clare Byrne in Elizabethan Life in Town and Country (1925; rpt. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1957), p. 179.

³⁴G. Ballard, Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain (Oxford: W. Jackson, 1752), pp. 212 - 222.

an equal with more sophisticated languages. Other women who have been justly lauded include the four Cooke sisters, whose translations from Greek, Italian, and French read like a theological primer; and Mary Sidney whose completion of a verse-translation of the Psalms begun by her brother (he did the first forty-three, she the remaining ninety-six) inspired Donne to write a poetic tribute in which Sir Philip is referred to as Moses and the Countess of Pembroke as Miriam.³⁵ A less well-known lady, but no doubt also typical of her class and times, is Elizabeth Legge who lived to be 105, who spoke Latin, English, French, Spanish and Irish, and whose later blindness was "thought to have been occasioned by much reading and writing by candle-light."³⁶

It is significant that many if not most of these bluestocking upperclass and noble women were Protestants of a precisian type, and an important principle in their religious code was a serious interest in the moral education of their children. As a result, many of their peers sought places for their sons and daughters in these godly households. Lord Burghley's home was the mecca of those seeking both intellectual and moral excellence for their children. His wife was the erudite Mildred Cooke and he himself had

³⁵The Psalms of Sir Philip Sidney and The Countess of Pembroke, ed. J. C. A. Rathmell (Anchor Books, 1963), pp. ix-x.

³⁶Ballard, p. 361.

strong and well-known views on the proper upbringing of young people. The combination of high principles and brutal common sense that made him such an ideal administrator comes through in the treatise of advice he wrote for his own son, Robert Cecil. The man who sometimes reluctantly translated Elizabeth's political via media into action evidently saw the advantage of balance where the upbringing of children was concerned when he wrote:

And I am verily persuaded that the foolish cockering of some parents and the oversterne carriage of others causeth more men and women to take evil courses than naturally their own vicious inclinations.³⁷

But this placing of young people in noble homes for educational purposes was not new, it had been going on since feudal times, when scions of baronial families were sent away to serve as pages to other lords and as a side-effect learned the courtly graces at their master's knee. The moral emphasis which developed in the 16th century as the result of the adoption of a more rigorous Protestantism by any particular lord and his lady merely gave an added advantage to an already flourishing system. However, where precisianism had its greatest effect was in the improvement it made in the quality of the home life of middle-class women.

Though essentially the Protestant and Puritan view

³⁷Advice to a Son, ed. L. B. Wright (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), p. 11.

of marriage forms a continuum with the pre-Reformation and Catholic concept of the relationship of husband and wife, once more the ideas inherent in the new relationship between God and his elect which Protestantism initiated would produce changes in the married state that would prove far-reaching and indeed revolutionary. The Puritan home shared many of the ideals of the Catholic home. When it was seen as the "smallest unit in the Puritan commonwealth,"³⁸ and the family as "the school of God,"³⁹ they were merely putting into practice such pre-Reformation concepts as those advanced by Vives in his Instruction to a Christian Woman. The aim of marriage, as always, was the engendering and moral education of children, but to the married state the Puritans added their own particular emphases. In effect both parents in a Puritan marriage had a mutual interest in cultivating an ordered atmosphere in the home. And if the upper classes had Castiglione's Courtier (translated by another of Sir Anthony Cooke's sons-in-law Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561) as the source book for noble and idealistic behaviour, the Puritan middle-class had a plethora of books on domestic conduct to dip into for guidance. The sources for these books were the pre-Reformation favourites, the New Testament, especially the

³⁸Knappen, p. 465.

³⁹I. Morgan, The Godly Preachers of the Elizabethan Church (London: The Epworth Press, 1965), p. 149.

teachings of Paul, the classics, and the Fathers. They discussed the relationship of husbands and wives, and the governing of the family including housekeeping, the bringing up of children, the managing of servants, and general household economics, which seem to provide an answer for every contingency. Thus old ideas dating back to medieval times and before were refurbished and used as guidelines for change actuated by new social and religious experience. As the "double standard" was frowned on by Puritan thought, as marriage for money alone (the godly remained prudent) was increasingly condemned, so men began to regard their wives as companions and helpmates, and their children ceased to be seen as mere chattels. C. L. Powell says, regarding the popular Renaissance attitude towards women:

It would be difficult to find in the whole of our period a single book of a religious or moral nature touching upon women in which it did not appear that she was, if not wholly weak and sinful, at least far inferior to man. The more lenient writers admitted that there were a few exceptions to this rule; but until Puritan ideals came to have some influence the average characterization represented women as at best but a 'necessary evil' for the propagation of the race.⁴⁰

Lady Margaret Hoby, wife of the younger Sir Thomas Hoby and surely an avid reader of her father-in-law's

⁴⁰C. L. Powell, English Domestic Relations, 1487-1653 (1917; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1972), p. 147. N.B. For further discussion of conduct books and their impact on marital habits, see the relevant chapters in L. Stone's The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), Wright's Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England, and Knappen's Tudor Puritanism.

translation, has left us a record in her diary of the daily life and religious scruples of an upper-class woman of Puritan convictions. The new confidence in spiritual matters, enjoyed by the elect shines through as she records her opinions of a London preacher: "... I hard to my knowledge nothing worth the notinge"⁴¹ Later she busily pens notes on several sermons to send to her minister, Mr. Rhodes. Lady Hoby was also a casuist recording her interest in the thorny problem of faith versus works,⁴² and having an earnest discussion with Mr. Rhodes on the "lawfullness of huntinge in it selfe."⁴³ And even if her marriage to Sir Thomas Hoby, judging from the meagre details we are given of it, appears to conform to the requirements of the time, she emerges as a woman who, within the confines of her intellectual capacity, took a lively interest in the religious and political controversies of her day.

If Lady Margaret Hoby is typical of the Puritan woman of the upper class, then Anne Lok is a prime example of the new Puritan middle-class woman. We know that Stephen Vaughan was scrupulous in his attention to his children's care and education. Letters in 1546 about a school master he had hired for his children and whom he had

⁴¹ Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby, ed. D. M. Meads (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1930), p. 151.

⁴² Diary, p. 113.

⁴³ Diary, p. 153.

regretfully to part with because, it seems, he was suspected, like so many others at the time, of heretical views; reveal the man to be as Vaughan says, "... a very good Latin man, ... a good Grecian, and speaketh well the French tongue."⁴⁴ A letter to Lord Cobham, with whom Vaughan was on friendly terms, seems to suggest that Cobham's son shared the school-master with the Vaughan children and Vaughan regrets the inconvenience occasioned by the man's departure.⁴⁵ More letters by Vaughan written after his wife's death show a continuing preoccupation with his children and household left so often in the care of "huggesters and handelinges" while he is away on the King's business. Finally, for the sake of his children's virtue as well as the "hazard" to his "things," he decides to marry again and his choice lights on Margery Brynkelow, the widow of Henry Brynkelow the notorious author of The Complaynt of Roderick Mars, who himself in his will had left five pounds "... to the Godly learned men who labour in the vinyard of the Lord, and fight against Anti-Christ."⁴⁶ Vaughan, while mentioning that Mrs. Brynkelow has little money, continues "... but an honest woman that feareth God is above all riches."⁴⁷

⁴⁴Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, XXI, ii, 22.

⁴⁵Henry VIII, i, 745.

⁴⁶DNB.

⁴⁷Henry VIII, i, 105.

Though Anne must have been in her early teens when her father married again, we cannot doubt that her step-mother guided her later adolescence along the paths of righteousness. With such careful spiritual nurture it is no wonder that among the elect Anne Lok's reputation for godly learning ranked high. Indeed no less an expert than John Knox pays tribute to her erudition when he prefaces his reply to her "cases of conscience" with the words "Sorie I am that ye have not received my Answers unto your Doubts, not so much that I think ye greatlie need them, as that I would not putt you in Suspicioun, that I contemned your requests."⁴⁸ Or are we to believe that that dour man was merely paying her a social compliment? Thus Anne, herself the product of a stringently Protestant home, was well equipped to guide her own children at the beginning of their life's journey. One can imagine that long before he started school, young Harrie had been taught to read, and had begun to negotiate the verses of the Bible which was being translated in Geneva while he was there and which undoubtedly was the cornerstone of the Lok home. He must also have been taken to listen to the many Puritan lecturers, those men without an ecclesiastical stipend who were privately paid by the godly to set up pulpit in various churches throughout London and the country. He may even have been

⁴⁸ Knox, Works, VI. 104.

taught the rapid script, called stenography, by which the listeners copied down sermons preparatory to discussing doctrinal points in "prophesying" sessions, or after family prayers at home.⁴⁹ These are all of course conjectures, but they cannot be far off the mark. The Biblical knowledge displayed in Lok's poems is testimony to his religious education.

Unfortunately we do not know where the young Henry Lok went to school. Living as he did in London he had the choice of many institutions, but two in particular were associated with the mercers, and he may well have gone to one of them. They were Saint Thomas Acon, which had been founded by the mercers in 1542, and Saint Paul's which had been entrusted to the care of the mercers by Colet and still continued to be administered by them. Assuming that Henry Lok went to one or the other, or to a school very like them, we may be sure that he pursued a curriculum of a strongly Genevan inclination. Watson, in his discussion of the English Grammar school, says of the years between 1559 and 1660:

This is the period of the Puritan influence on the schools. The return of the Protestant exiles to England from Strassburg, Frankfurt, and Geneva ... brought into England the keenest desire to educate

⁴⁹ Joan Simon quotes a contemporary observer who mentions that the habit was widespread in England at the time (Education and Society in Tudor England, Cambridge, University Press, 1967, pp. 384-85).

the children of the country in the tenets of Protestantism and to arouse the fiercest aversion against and even terror of the Roman Catholic regime.⁵⁰

The curriculum would still contain Latin and Greek which, together with Hebrew, were regarded as holy languages enabling the student to read the Bible in its earlier versions, but the Latin colloquies of Erasmus and Vives had been replaced by works by Castellion and Cordier: the former based his subject matter on the Bible, while the latter depicted the activities of middle-class Puritan boys. The Calvin or Newell catechism would also be studied daily, perhaps also French, and certainly English grammar.⁵¹ All this of course served to extend and enhance the values learned in the home.

But other influences were at work as well. If the Lok family was still living "nygh to Bow Kirk in Chaipsayd", to which John Knox addressed his letters,⁵² then the young Henry Lok walked his straight and narrow spiritual way amongst some of the most exciting broadways and byways of the city of London. Of Cheapward Stow says, "From the great conduit west be many fair and large houses, for the

⁵⁰F. Watson, The English Grammar Schools to 1660 (New York: Augustus M. Keeley, 1970), p. 535.

⁵¹Simon, p. 316.

⁵²Knox, Works, VI, 237.

most part possessed of mercers up to the corner of Cordwainer Street⁵³ In the seventeenth century a later Londoner, Sir George Buck, would call the city a "third university" and list the schools, lectures, and entertainments available to anyone living there.⁵⁴ Many of these educational benefits existed in Henry Lok's time and he must have learned some useful lessons just by studying his immediate environment. The road that ran through Cheapside from east to west, for instance, was justly famous and was "honoured by the passage of every civic pageant and royal progress."⁵⁵ All around him Henry Lok could see the result of the thrift and enterprise of people very like his father. Perhaps too he often saw his father take part in some mercantile ceremony, or listened to his reports of the great godly dinners, when the merchants joined together to feast and afterwards sing psalms. And then of course there was the rest of the great city open for exploration. It was a London divided into areas of specialized trade: he could watch the servant girl buy medicines and groceries in Bucksbury; buy books in Paul's churchyard; be fitted at London Bridge for a new suit before going up to Cambridge; avert his eyes from the

⁵³ J. Stow, London Under Elizabeth: A Survey, ed. Henry Morley (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1890), p. 263.

⁵⁴ Simon, pp. 388-389.

⁵⁵ Byrne, pp. 52-53.

taverns and sideshows of Fleet street; see graphic examples of the wages of sin amongst the prostitutes and their clients at Turnbull; and watch the ships of the world come and go on the Thames, the greatest thoroughfare of them all.⁵⁶ Thus we can assume that Henry Lok spent the years after his return from Geneva in ideal circumstances: to the solid bastion of a godly home and careful schooling was added the stimulation of living in London, the very centre of the new expanding Elizabethan world. As he prepared to go up to Cambridge in the mid-sixties he must have carried with him the high hopes of his parents that he would extend the fame and uphold the honour of both the Vaughans and the Loks.

That is, of course, if Henry Lok went to Cambridge. The record states that a Henry Lok matriculated from St. John's College in 1569 and he is described as "perhaps identical with the poet of the name. If so third son of Henry Locke, mercer. Said to have studied at Oxford."⁵⁷ Which immediately leads us to two questions: did Anne Lok have other sons before the birth of Henry? and did Henry Lok also go to Oxford University? To the former question we have no answer, but there is a record of his attendance at Oxford. Anthony Wood expands it to read thus:

⁵⁶Byrne, Chap. III.

⁵⁷Alumni Cantabrigienses, III, 97.

Henry Lok, a divine poet, was born of genteel parents in the beginning [sic] of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, spent some time in Oxon between the years of his age 16 and 21, but whether he took a degree, or had one confer'd upon him by creation, I cannot justly tell. Afterwards he retired to the royal court, was received into the patronage of a noble Mecaenas [sic] and published⁵⁸

The Coopers in their compilation of famous students of Cambridge,⁵⁹ though they announce their intention of including authors amongst others, do not list Henry Lok's name. However, though the evidence is somewhat suspect, given the Loks' place in society, and the situation in the universities in the mid-1560s, there is a strong probability that he did go to one or the other or both universities. What then did he find there?

First of all we discover that our archetypal figure set out on the next phase of his education just at the time when both Oxford and Cambridge were undergoing radical change. These changes can be traced to two mainsprings, enrollments, and curriculum. Until the beginning of Elizabeth's reign private or chivalric education still enjoyed general favour amongst the nobility. However, as a result of social changes in the fabric of society -- a new emphasis on national unity rather than local allegiance, and on career rather than vocation -- the education the

⁵⁸ A. Wood, Athenae Oxonienses, ed. P. Bliss (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969), I, 662.

⁵⁹ Athenae Cantabrigienses.

universities gave gradually came to be seen as a more fitting preparation for life than the old feudal practices. The change-over was slow; at first only a few sons of noble-men attended university. But a series of figures taken from a typical Cambridge college and covering the years 1560 to 1629 shows that, decade by decade, there was a steady increase in the number of the sons of the gentry and nobility attending university.⁶⁰ The result was reflected in "new vitality" and increased prestige as well as "endowment in profusion."⁶¹ The other change, that of curriculum, was also slow but it came about as a direct result of the new make-up of the student body. These young gentlemen "did not seek learning either as a preparation for a career in the Church or as the foundation for higher study in theology but for the virtues, wisdom, and power it could bestow." As a result secular learning became "justified for its own sake and for its service to secular purposes."⁶²

This does not mean that religion had lost its place in the universities. On the contrary they were often havens for ministers of a Puritan mind as well as jousting grounds for religious altercation and rebellion. One wonders, for instance, if Henry Lok was one of the three

⁶⁰M. H. Curtis, Oxford and Cambridge in Transition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 60.

⁶¹Curtis, p. 3.

⁶²Curtis, p. 123.

hundred students and fellows who refused to use the surplice in St. John's College chapel in 1566.⁶³ Puritans especially also saw the religious education still available at the universities as "the best remedy for a church filled with 'dumb dogs' who could not preach."⁶⁴ Thomas Cartwright himself was Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity until his separatist tendencies caused his dismissal; and many important Puritan churchmen of the age -- both moderate and extreme -- found a congenial atmosphere for spreading the Word in both universities, but especially at Cambridge. The two Chancellors during the time Lok attended the universities were Lord Burghley at Cambridge, and the earl of Leicester at Oxford. One was the Queen's political right hand, the other a rising and ambitious politician and a personal favourite of Elizabeth. Though rivals at Court they both sympathized with the reformers. Political necessity often made Cecil act against the Puritan malcontents more strongly than he might personally desire, while Leicester, though often castigated for his vacillating attitude towards the Reformed faction, most notably by Henry Lok's father's "servant" of Geneva days, Thomas Wood,⁶⁵

⁶³Curtis, p. 195.

⁶⁴Curtis, p. 190.

⁶⁵See "Letters of Thomas Wood, Puritan, 1566-1577", ed. P. Collinson, Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, No. 5, Nov. 1960 (University of London: The Athlone Press, 1960).

used his position of influence both prudently and intelligently. In particular, Collinson reminds us of the extent of his ecclesiastical influence and suggests that at least six of the early Elizabethan bishops with precisian views owed their preferment to Leicester, while he was known as a friend of prominent churchmen of the moderate Puritan party throughout his life.⁶⁶

The Queen thought it necessary early in her reign to make a royal visit to each university: to Cambridge in 1564 and to Oxford in 1566. Certainly, as a learned woman in her own right, she came to hear the Greek and Latin orations and to follow knowledgeably the intricacies of the rhetorical figures. But these journeys may also be seen as what later centuries would call expeditions of "showing-the-flag" and were no doubt aimed at those unruly university preachers who insisted on reforming the Anglican church more than she thought either proper or necessary. We note, however, that this did not prevent Cartwright from more or less inaugurating the classis or presbyterian movement with his series of lectures on ecclesiastical authority and church organization in 1569 and 1570.⁶⁷ It would take more than a royal progress to halt the labourers in the Lord's vineyard. As A. L. Rowse somewhat grudgingly

⁶⁶Collinson, "Letters of Thomas Wood," pp. xxi-xxiii.

⁶⁷P. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), pp. 127-129.

remarks:

The more one studies these people in their time, the more one is impressed by their unyielding spirit: they were irrepressible, they would not give in, they were absolutely determined to have their own way in the end.⁶⁸

As Henry Lok's years at university were coming to an end one of these "unyielding spirits", Edward Dering, became a member of his own family. One imagines that Dering had more than passing influence on the twenty year old Lok. His actions would for a short while bring the family once more into the vortex of religious controversy and provide a fitting climax to the education of the "divine poet."

The Dering Interlude

His watchmen are blind: they are ignorant, they are dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

Isaiah 56: 10

In 1571 Henry Lok the elder died "after a lingering illness."⁶⁹ Because our poet's father has of necessity been the silent partner in the Lok marriage I record his will in full. Its tone suggests that he fully shared the religious beliefs of what John Knox would call his "bed-fellow." It states:

⁶⁸ A. L. Rowse, The England of Elizabeth (1950; rpt. Cardinal-Paperback, 1973), p. 202.

⁶⁹ Collinson, "The Role of Women," p. 267.

In the name of God, Amen. -- I Henry Lok, presenthe [sic: presentlie] I thanke my God of perfect memorie, thoughe sicke and weake in bodie, doe make this my last will and testament in manner and form following: -- First, as I acknowledge myself a most myserable sinner, soe I most humbly flie to the infinite mercie of my Lorde God and deare Father, moste instantlie craveinge of his eternall goodness the ternall [sic] forgiveness of all my synnes for his dear Son Jesus Christes sake, whome I acknowledge my onely Saviour, throwe whose death, by constant faith, I hope to enjoye eternall life thus -- bequeatheing my soule to God, my bodye I commit to be buryed according to the direction of my good Wife. As touching my worldelie goods, whatsoever they be, I give and bequeathe them to my wife, Anne Locke. And I doe make my onellie executor, unto this my last will, my good and well-beloved Brother, Michael.⁷⁰

We note that there are no separate bequests for the children, and that Lok seems to have a great deal of faith in the ability and common sense of his wife. Amongst the many monuments in the Mercer's chapel in Cheapward that Stow chose to mention are those to John and Sir William Lok; one assumes that Henry Lok was buried there too.⁷¹

Young Henry would be about eighteen years old at this time and had probably just gone up to Oxford. It was a difficult period for the reformers, for by now it was becoming apparent that the authorities were intent on enforcing official Anglican hegemony in the Protestant church. In 1565 all preaching licences were called in and reissued only to ministers who agreed to follow the correct

⁷⁰Knox, Works, VI, 689-90, quoted in the Appendix.

⁷¹Stow, p. 263.

line. As a result, many of the more fervent and learned men were lost to the regular ministry.⁷² The deprivation of preachers was so severe that Trinterud states:

A chronological study of the publications of the 1560s and 1570s makes it clear ... that in a nation of three million people ... a silence reigned greater than in any other nation of western Europe, whether Catholic or Protestant.⁷³

It was at this troubled time that the name of Edward Dering came into prominence. Though he is often cited in works on the Elizabethan period as an example of a rebellious churchman, once more we are indebted to Patrick Collinson for a more comprehensive study of his character and actions, and for introducing us to Edward Dering the human being.⁷⁴

Collinson begins by telling us that this "archetype of the puritan divine" belonged to respectable gentry stock and was born about 1540. He was at Christ's College Cambridge in the early 1560s and commenced MA in 1563. Knappen says he began the tradition that made Christ's College "the greatest Puritan seminary of them all."⁷⁵ His Greek

⁷²C. Hill, Society and Puritanism (Panther Paperback, 1964), p. 35.

⁷³L. J. Trinterud, Elizabethan Puritanism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 133.

⁷⁴P. Collinson, A Mirror of Elizabethan Puritanism (London: Dr. Williams's Trust, 1964). N.B. Unless otherwise stated, most of the information on Dering in this chapter is taken from the above article.

⁷⁵Knappen, p. 219.

scholarship was recognized by his peers and he was chosen to make the Greek oration to the Queen when she visited Cambridge in 1564. Later he was one of the chaplains to the duke of Norfolk until that unfortunate magnate lost his head as a result of plotting to put Mary Stuart on the throne of England. It is significant that during the vestiarian controversy, Dering did not object to wearing the cap and surplice, stating, "whyle any lawe did binde me to weare cappe and surplesse, I did weare both."⁷⁶ He was not, therefore, by nature an extremist, preferring to emphasize the need for preaching the gospel rather than risk, by flouting the law, being deprived of the opportunity to do so. This emphasis on the need for preaching cost Dering the brilliant career in the church which was certainly within his grasp in the late 1560s. Collinson says that it may have been a "crisis of conscience," brought on by Cartwright's lectures at Cambridge in 1570, which caused him suddenly to resign all his posts and leave the rarefied and relatively protected atmosphere of the university to enter the lists as a Protestant champion preaching to a wider audience.

With his emphasis on the importance of preaching Dering places himself in the mainstream of the Puritan ethic. It was a commonplace amongst the godly preachers

⁷⁶Collinson, Mirror, p. 7.

that they were the true descendants of the preaching friars of the medieval church and that, unlike the deviant form of Elizabethan Anglicanism, theirs was the religion of direct succession. Like the monks, Puritan preachers practised both the active and the contemplative life; and the epithet they used for non-preaching incumbents, "dumb dogs," was the same as that used in Oxford by the friars in 1223.⁷⁷ In fact, the very towns that welcomed the preaching friars now welcomed the godly preachers.⁷⁸ Watkins says that "Puritans inherited without question and almost unchanged the scholastic model of human nature."⁷⁹ In his incessant emphasis on the sinfulness of humanity and the need to repent, Dering exemplifies this Puritan trait and certainly deserves the label of "Elizabethan Savonarola" which Collinson gives him.⁸⁰ A short quotation from a letter of castigation he sent to Henry Neville, Lord Abergavenny, is sufficient evidence of the thrust of his godly vituperation:

The wayes of your walking, they have byn suche, that you above other seeme a lothesome example, in whome you may behold an evell man, an enemy to the

⁷⁷Morgan, p. 2.

⁷⁸Morgan, p. 43.

⁷⁹O. C. Watkins, The Puritan Experience (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), pp. 5-6.

⁸⁰Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, p. 135.

crosse of Christ, whose belly is his God, whose
ende is distruction, and whose glorie is torne
into endles shame.⁸¹

After leaving Cambridge, and antagonizing all of his patrons, Dering eventually found his way to London and it is there that Anne Lok must have met him, perhaps as a listener to his sermons. Certainly he soon had a group of devoted and pious ladies as his friends and Anne Lok was one of them.⁸² In 1572, the same year that Norfolk was executed, he and Anne Lok were married, Dering being born c. 1540, and her (third) son in the early '50s. Anne must have been appreciably older than her Savonarola. For Anne not only was this marriage an alliance with a man whose noble religious aspirations she most wholeheartedly supported, but also, as a result of Dering's connections with the high gentry, it raised her status socially. It was as if she reentered the world of her childhood when she was on intimate terms with the members of Lord Cobham's family. Certainly she was never socially better allied than during her second marriage. Collinson sees Dering as the successor to Knox rather than Henry Lok.⁸³ Once more she was placed close

⁸¹Collinson, Mirror, p. 13.

⁸²Collinson, "The Role of Women," p. 269. He lists them as Lady Mildmay, Lady Goldie, Mrs. Mary Honeywood, Mrs. Barret, "and above all Mrs. Catherine Killegrewe, one of the four learned daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke"

⁸³Collinson, "The Role of Women," p. 267.

to one who wished to cleanse and reform the church. But there was an even more striking likeness between the two men: each had used a sermon to castigate his sovereign on his or her shortcomings. In 1565 Knox had preached before Lord Darnley one month after he had married Mary Stuart and been proclaimed King.⁸⁴ Knox's sermon is replete with references to the abominations of the Babylonians, to Ahab's failure to correct his wife Jezebel, and to the fate of those children of Israel who worshipped false gods. Anne Lok must surely have received news if not a copy of this famous sermon after it was printed in 1566. Similarly, in February 1569-70, Dering had preached a sermon before Queen Elizabeth and had used specific Biblical texts to point the way of her duty.⁸⁵ Using such loaded names as David, Abraham, and Solomon, he reminds the Queen of what happened to the kings of Judah and Israel when they failed in their trust. He proclaims the perils of popery and repeats, "especially and above all things, look unto your ministry." Later he embroiders on this his main theme: "of all miseries wherewith the church is grieved, none is greater than this, that her ministers be ignorant and say nothing." He continues with a stinging attack on the

⁸⁴ Knox, Works, VI, 221-273.

⁸⁵ The sermon is reprinted in Trinterud's Elizabethan Puritanism, pp. 138-161, and I have used this book as the source for the resume.

state of the ministry in the Queen's own realm:

Look upon your ministry ... some shake bucklers, some ruffians, some hawkers and hunters, some dicers and carders, some blind guides and cannot see, some dumb dogs and will not bark. And yet a thousand more iniquities have now covered the priesthood. And yet you, in the meanwhile that all these whoredoms are committed, you at whose hands God will require it, you sit still and are careless.

He concludes by suggesting a remedy, the usual fashion in Puritan sermons. For though the elect were quick to point out the sinfulness of human kind, they always provided an answer; their business was to enlighten souls, not damn them. Thus the Queen is told to "keep back the ignorant from the ministry, ... bridle ... their greedy appetites. Take away dispensations, pluralities, totquots, non-residences, and such other sins." I have quoted at some length from this sermon because to me it contains the essence of Dering's character: always remaining within the law, eschewing the wilder reaches of Puritan civil disobedience and protest (he publicly declared at Paul's cross that he would take no part in the Admonition to Parliament controversy, though he visited its authors, Field and Wilcox, in prison),⁸⁶ he concentrated his efforts on the prime need as he saw it of an educated preaching ministry, while in his own preaching his conscience was his only guide.

⁸⁶Trinterud, p. 132.

In the four years of their marriage the Derings faced many vicissitudes together. There was Dering's appearance before the Star Chamber when only influential friends at Court protected him from a possible prison sentence. Then, during the campaign against the Puritans in London after the presentation of the first Admonition, Dering felt that Anne might be in danger; but his faith in her faith is boundless: "God hath made her rich in grace and knowledge to give an account of her doing."⁸⁷ Finally came the knowledge of the certainty that he would die early, a victim of tuberculosis. This occurred in 1576 and Collinson describes his end as a "stylized death-bed scene" with people taking notes of his last words.

Even though Dering was Henry Lok's step-father for only a short while, he must have had more than a passing influence on the young man. If he respected legal boundaries, Dering also allowed his conscience boundless sway. This may well have seemed to the young Lok a sensible and pragmatic way for a godly man to act in the face of the reality of power -- except that one should not annoy all of one's patrons at once, and certainly not the Queen. Dering's death cuts short any further musings on this subject; he "became his admirers" and his name lived on in his works. Amongst the many, two stand out: A short Catechism for householders.

⁸⁷Collinson, "The Role of Women," p. 270.

which became the most influential of all catechisms; and the famous sermon before the Queen of which Collinson says, "no Elizabethan sermon was more often reprinted." These two works, to use the common Puritan analogy of banking, may also be seen to represent for Henry Lok the credit and debit sides of trying to serve both God and the state. The catechism stresses the primary importance of an educated conscience, but the unfortunate results of the sermon illustrate the perils of allowing that conscience imprudent latitude. As he left Oxford for the protection of his "noble Mecaenas" Henry Lok may also have juggled the pluses and minuses of Dering's affect on his own incipient career at Court. But time was on his side; he would take care to cultivate his patrons -- and never to annoy the Queen.

PART II: A CECIL MAN

Apprenticeship

Be ever sure to keep some great man thy friend, but trouble him not for trifles, compliment him often, present [him] with many but small gifts and of little charge, and if thou have cause to bestow any great gratuity let it then be some such thing as may be daily in sight, for otherwise in this ambitious age thou mayest remain like a hop without a pole, live in obscurity, and be made a football for every insulting companion to spurn at.

William Cecil, Lord Burghley, Advice to a Son¹

Between 1573 and 1575 Henry Lok left Oxford and, as Wood tells us, "retired to the royal court and was received into the patronage of a noble Mecaenas [sic]."² However, before taking this decision, the Lok family must have discussed the other opportunities open to a bright university-trained young man of the age. It was a sad time for the immediate family. Dering was by now obviously dying and Anne probably spent much of her time nursing him. However, Michael Lok, her first husband's brother, and executor of his will, was available for advice. We can imagine him taking time out from his current occupation of overseeing

¹Advice to a Son, ed. L. B. Wright (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1926), p. 12.

²A. Wood, Athenae Oxonienses, ed. P. Bliss (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969), I, 662.

the arrangements for yet another expedition going in search of the elusive North West Passage to attend a family council which weighed the pros and cons of Henry's future prospects. There were at least three careers open to the young man: the church, commerce, and some position at Court. The church must have been rejected almost at once, and for several reasons. Ruth Kelso suggests that "divinity, though sometimes piously mentioned as a calling for gentlemen drew forth even less enthusiasm than medicine."³ We can also think of several reasons why Henry Lok, despite the example of his distinguished step-father, would follow the mainstream in his thoughts on this subject. Even though his own religious beliefs, as they are revealed in his letters, appear to preclude any extreme theological deviation, the teachings of his mother and the example of his step-father must have inclined him to the view that the first duty of a parson was to preach. However, this was no time for preaching parsons of the Puritan school unless they had a taste for spiritual martyrdom and temporal poverty. For even though there was a dangerous imbalance of power in the Catholic favour in Europe, with Spain and her allies making obvious preparations to overthrow Elizabeth, and despite the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in 1572, the Queen was sticking to her purpose of balancing

³R. Kelso, The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the 16th Century (1929; rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964), p. 54.

the polarities of Catholicism and Presbyterianism in her kingdom. At the same time she was trying to draw as many of her subjects as possible towards a religious via media, one of the tenets of which was that preaching was necessary, but that a great deal of preaching was not. Thus, though Lok may well have been by education and habit eminently equipped for the divine calling, he or his family rejected it, leaving him to find for his own obvious proselytizing talents an outlet in religious poetry.

A career in the commercial world was another possibility, and this must have engendered much discussion. There is no doubt that the close-knit brotherhood of the Merchant Adventurers or the Mercer's Company, in remembrance of his father, and with the active aid of his Uncle Michael, would have found a place for him. Miss Kelso tells us that "trade was often the cause of ennobling, and younger sons of gentlemen were commonly bound apprentice to the great merchants of London."⁴ But commerce too was rejected and we do not know why. Were there (as Wood suggests) two older brothers and were they already in trade? Was it because Henry himself had no real talent for business? (Later experiences would seem to indicate this). Perhaps a career in trade was never ever considered. What we do know is that, possibly through the influence of old

⁴Kelso, p. 61.

friends of his mother from Geneva days who were now close to the centre of the system, Henry Lok was fortunate enough to become the protege of Lord Burghley himself. Thus he commenced his career at Court under the protection of the Queen's first minister, a man who, because of the important offices he held and the intricate channels of power he controlled, had emerged as what MacCaffrey calls "a single dominant figure as patronage minister."⁵

In leaving his family to go to Court one might say that, in some respects, Henry Lok was exchanging one home for another. Neale describes the Court as "a large family, many, perhaps most, owed their offices there to the patronage of the great; and close bonds of friendship and clientage bound them together."⁶ What is more, many senior members of this new family shared the same religious beliefs as the Lok family. MacCaffrey even suggests the presence of a specific political type common to the time,

... the man of conviction, for whom office or influence meant the chance to advance an ideal. New to the English scene, he was no favourite with the Queen; but Walsingham, the second Lord Bedford, Huntingdon, Knollys, ... are examples of the single-minded Protestant idealist. And for a surprisingly large proportion of the politically

⁵W. T. MacCaffrey, "Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics," Elizabethan Government and Society, ed. S. T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield, C. H. Williams (University of London: The Athlone Press, 1961), p. 109.

⁶J. E. Neale, The Elizabethan House of Commons (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), p. 298.

mind, some tinge of austere Protestant feeling was an integral feature of their outlook.⁷

One may add that, though the men in power were also professional politicians and courtiers, and were often not averse to using any means necessary to further their own interests or those of their country, they also had a vested interest in nurturing the careers of likely young men with godly backgrounds. Both Walsingham and Burghley accepted the necessity for dealing with all sorts and conditions of men, yet each held stringent personal beliefs concerning the correct moral behaviour of a Christian gentleman.

But of course the Court was not by any means solely a kind of presbytery; on the contrary it was full of diversity. Stately ceremony and gay entertainments, solemn receptions with sonorous speeches, and scandalous gossip and incessant rumour were all components of its great spectacle. The splendour of the setting itself was described some years later by an impressed visitor who informed his readers that the Queen's own apartments were "costly beyond everything; the tapestries are garnished with gold, pearls, and precious stones ... not to mention the royal throne, which is studded with very large diamonds, rubies and sapphires."⁸ The Queen, he continued, played

⁷MacCaffrey, pp. 101-102.

⁸England as seen by Foreigners in the days of Elizabeth and James I, ed. W. B. Rye (1865; rpt. New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1967), p. 18.

"very sweetly and skillfully on her instrument the strings of which were of gold and silver."⁹ As Henry Lok looked around him and absorbed the exciting experiences of his new world, as he reflected on the importance of his new master, Lord Burghley, he must have thought of himself as a member of that fortunate minority who MacCaffrey says could "move on to the solid respectability and substantial rewards of an official career."¹⁰

At the beginning, however, a certain amount of tedious work was to be expected and Henry Lok appears to have been sent off to France as one of Burghley's many agents scattered throughout Britain and the Continent. The primary aim of an agent was to obtain and transmit "intelligence", as it was known then. It could be political or mercantile, or a combination of both. His home base could be as varied as luck would allow. If he had influence, or a special talent, or friends in high places in a particular country, he might be sent abroad as an accredited envoy to some foreign Court. Once there, besides sending letters home describing the comings and goings of other envoys and visitors, and detailing the exports and imports, and troop movements if any, he was free to enjoy such entertainment as the Court provided. But this was the exception rather

⁹Rye, p. 12.

¹⁰MacCaffrey, p. 101.

than the rule. The agent's usual haunt was a grimy border town overlooking a potential enemy's territory, or some port of embarkation, where he would observe the often boring daily events. He usually provided himself with a cover story: an Englishman travelling abroad, a student interested in learning the language. Sometimes, if he had the necessary capital, he would start a business and use it as a cover. Often bona fide merchants were part-time agents, combining business and espionage during their regular trips to the continent. An example of a man who balanced trading with spying is Thomas Honiman, whom Handover describes as "the most important man in [Robert] Cecil's system."¹¹ His brother ran a thriving agency for him at Bayonne which was the headquarters of the territory he was responsible for. However, the majority of the agents involved in Burghley's espionage organization and later his son's, were men willing, as Miss Handover says, "to drudge around the ports."¹² The best of these "drudges" were able to make succinct if somewhat stilted summaries of the politically important events taking place in their area. They listed who met whom, where, and when. From their vantage point overlooking a harbour they would detail the supplies taken on board an enemy ship, the number of water

¹¹P. M. Handover, The Second Cecil (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1959), p. 126.

¹²Handover, p. 175.

barrels loaded could be a clue to the length of the projected journey and to its ultimate destination. As he watched and waited, Henry Lok could not have done better than take as his personal maxim what was reported of his friend and patron, Sir Henry Killigrew, "Two eyes he said he travelled with; the one of wariness upon himself, the other of observation upon others."¹³

The information obtained was coded in various ways. Letters with particularly sensitive information in them were written in cipher. At other times only the names of important people were disguised. Sometimes the letters were enlivened by tidbits of news with nothing but gossip value. A memorable snippet from a certain Marsh to Robert Cecil tells of a young woman found in bed with her brother and how they both escaped the mandatory death penalty because of the corruptness of the Spanish Courts.¹⁴ Once the letters were written they had to be got back as quickly as possible. All sorts of people were involved in this rapid courier service: diplomats, ships' captains, and hostlers transferred the letters from one to the other at designated points on the route and sped them home. When a situation was explosive and the news too delicate to

¹³D. Lloyd, State-Worthies. Or, The States-men and Favourites of England Since the Reformation . . ., 2d ed (1670), p. 586.

¹⁴SP Dom., 1598-1601, v. 426.

entrust to anyone, let alone paper, then the agent himself, would make the journey and report in person. On such occasions a particularly trusted man, and Henry Lok seems to have been so-regarded, often delivered top secret messages from other agents working in the area. During his thirty-year career as a "Cecil man" Henry Lok would perform boring tasks, and would experience the reward of being the favoured companion of a King. But these were early days and he was still undergoing his apprenticeship.

Our first definite news of him occurs in September 1577 when he is found in Poitiers and is inadvertently involved in an incident concerning one of Walsingham's agents. The whole little episode is in itself an object lesson of the insecurity which was part of an agent's life. One slip might mean the loss of an important patron; an imprudent act might render one useless in a whole area. A regular feature of agents' letters is defence of past actions and protestations of present loyalty. In this case the agent is writing to his political master to explain what seems to be a gift of a horse on his part to "young Vere."¹⁵ "I fear my action has been questioned," he writes, "and I shall not be quiet until I hear the true

¹⁵SP For., 1577-8, pp. 192-93. Vere was a member of the de Vere family whose most important scion, Edward de Vere, earl of Oxford, had not only been Burghley's ward, but was married (albeit unhappily) to Burghley's daughter.

cause of your motion." He then goes on to recount how the two "young Veres" had come to Poitiers intent upon serving in the wars with "Monsieur," that is, the future Henry III but, discovering that there was no action at that moment, had decided to return to Paris. They had neither horses nor money and asked to be provided with both. The elder Vere appears to have been very importunate so that the agent eventually provided him with an "ambling nag" because "I would be ashamed for the honour of my country and for the reputation of the Earl of Oxford that he should go to Paris on foot." It would seem that the matter was settled. However, the elder Vere had sold the animal the next day and had "prayed Mr. Lock who was then here, to say nothing of the horse to my Lord of Oxford." The agent is upset by Vere's actions: "God send him better company to make him a better man," he comments. He then gets down to the nub of the matter, the implicit questions behind Walsingham's displeasure. What was he doing aiding two young men who had come to France with the avowed intention of fighting with Henry III, son of Catherine de Medicis, the perpetrator of the St. Bartholomew Massacre? Why had he not dissuaded these young Englishmen from their desire to join the Holy League formed by the detested Duke of Guise? Once more there is a ready answer. Walsingham is informed that, had the Veres been his own relatives or friends, the agent would have stopped them, but "others had been

recommended not long before to serve here in like sort by great personages in England, and Mr. Lock told me that those only had reputation among the nobility of the Court that sought to serve of the King's side."¹⁶ He continues, "and to be plain with you, I was not sorry to see some young fellows of 'no great countenance or service' join the King's party, which might have excused young Norreys and such others as Mr. Lock said to be then ready to go towards "Rochelle" [i.e., to serve with the Huguenots].¹⁷ The episode is at last explained, one hopes to the satisfaction of Walsingham. Henry Lok comes out of it showing that he had acquired a veneer of political sophistication, as well as

¹⁶ This could be an indirect reference to Edward de Vere, earl of Oxford, who had run away to France some years before, was rumoured to have been welcomed by English Catholic exiles, and sought to fight for the duke of Alva in the Netherlands. The rumours were never proved and the Queen, whose favourite he was, called him home and forgave him. See Read, Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth (London, 1960), pp. 130-31.

¹⁷ Depending on which "young Veres" were involved, the agent could not have been more wrong. When dates of birth are taken into consideration, it is probable that the boys were the sons of Geoffrey de Vere, and therefore cousins of Oxford. Of Geoffrey de Vere's four sons, three were old enough at the time to have taken part in this escapade. If one of them was the third son, Francis, born in 1560, then he would fully vindicate in the future any aspersions cast upon his military prowess by Walsingham's agent. He would become one of England's most famous generals, earning his spurs in the Netherlands fighting for the Protestant cause. His bravery at Sluys, when he defeated the pride of the Spanish infantry, would cause him to be known as "young Vere who fought at Sluys." (See DNB). A piquant postscript is provided by the fact that one of Lok's dedicatory sonnets is addressed to Sir Francis Vere.

an ability to use events to help the cause his conscience favoured.

There are no more references to Lok for several years. One presumes that he continued his travels, gaining experience and confidence. We next hear of him in January 1581-82 when Roger Bodenham, an English merchant trading in Spain who had been hired by Walsingham to report on activities there but who, it seems, had other masters as well, informs Burghley from Spain that he is worried about the non-arrival of his letters home. "I will henceforth send all my letters to Mr. Locke, by whom I shall be certain of the delivery of them," he writes.¹⁸ Henry Lok appears to have acquired a reputation as a man who not only had easy access to Burghley, but who could be relied on in an emergency. Another five years pass without specific news of Lok. Again we must assume that he continued his espionage work, travelling back and forth from England to France and Spain, retracing his steps so often that this part of the continent became as familiar to him as his own native London.

There had been a new development within the Lok family during this time. Some time before 1583 Anne had married again. Her new husband, Richard Prowse, whom Collinson calls "an Exeter draper and substantial figure in

¹⁸ SP For., XV, 1581-82, p. 13.

West country affairs,"¹⁹ seems to be more truly a successor to Henry her first husband than to the saintly Dering. Collinson tells us that Prowse was successively bailiff, sheriff, and alderman of Exeter, and mayor three times, as well as being a member of Parliament. His son by his first marriage, John Prowse, would also become a prominent Exeter MP and ally himself with other "firm Devon Protestants", the Carews and the Periams. This was another important move for Anne Lok, both physically and socially. First, she exchanged London as her home for the city of Exeter, which Hoskins calls "one of the largest and wealthiest in Elizabethan England."²⁰ Secondly, she substituted her somewhat exalted social position as the well-born Dering's widow for a return once more to the merchant class. However, in this case it was a particularly wealthy and compact provincial group with close ties to the gentry. At the same time Anne was not going into the West Country as a complete stranger. On the contrary she was rejoining a group of people many of whom she must have known through the connections of her first two husbands. Her sister-in-law Dorothy, one of Sir William Lok's several daughters, had married as a second husband Michael Cosworth whose family

¹⁹Collinson, "The Role of Women," p. 270.

²⁰Hoskins, "The Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter," Elizabethan Government and Society, ed. Bindoff et al., p. 164.

roots were in Cornwall. Cosworth, whose own translations of the Psalms into English metre were widely praised, was a cousin of Richard Carew the well-known author of the Survey of Cornwall. Carew in turn was related by blood or marriage to what Rowse calls "a thickly coagulated west-country cousinage, which knit together the gentry of Devon and Cornwall and made them a factor of some importance in national politics."²¹ We must also remember that Anne's second husband, Edward Dering, had as "close personal friends" Sir Henry Killigrew, a member of a well-known and at times infamous Cornish family, and his wife the former Catherine Cooke, sister-in-law to Burghley, Hoby the translator, and Sir Nicholas Bacon.²² At this time several Devonshire mercantile families were putting some of their profits into real estate, and some branches were moving into the landed gentry class. Hoskins mentions as members of this latter group the Hursts, Martins, Periams, Davys, and Prestwoods.²³ Thus gentry and merchant families in this part of the British Isles intermingled and intermarried, and shared the fruits of wealth, class, and power to a greater extent than in the more rigidly hierarchical

²¹A. L. Rowse, Tudor Cornwall (1941; New Edition, Macmillan, 1969), p. 85.

²²P. Collinson, A Mirror of Elizabethan Puritanism, p. 21.

²³Hoskins, p. 176.

society that clustered around the centre at London and the Court. It is probable that through the family's west country connections Henry Lok became familiar with the Raleigh, Carew, Periam and Blount families, as well as with the Wooleys from Somerset next door. The tone of the dedicatory sonnets he wrote to some members of the above families often conveys a more personal relationship than was general between a poet and a sought-after patron. Also it may well have been the influence of Henry Lok's western relations that obtained a post for his cousin, Zacharias Lok (son of Michael), as secretary to Henry Carey, first Lord Hunsdon, whose ancestry kept him interested in the west though he was by birth a Kentishman. Lok's mother then moved from London and Henry, who on his frequent trips to Court must have visited her often, would now see less of her. But, as we shall discover, he cultivated the ties with the west country and must have made regular journeys into those parts. Sidney Lee tells us that he married an Anne Moyle of Cornwall,²⁴ and later in life Lok would make strenuous efforts to obtain a sinecure in Devon or Cornwall which would enable him to settle permanently in one of those counties.

But these were the early years of Lok's career,

²⁴ See DNB article which only lists two children, Henry, born in 1592, and Charles. We shall discover through Lok's letters that there were at least three sons as well as other younger children.

long before any thought of retirement, and he was gaining in experience and confidence. In 1586 he wrote a memorandum to Lord Burghley giving him "reasons out of the civil law to prove that it standeth with justice to proceed criminally against the Queen of Scots."²⁵ This is the first indication we have of any interest in Scottish affairs on Lok's part. Indeed, it may not ~~have been~~ interest per se but rather the offshoot of his own religious convictions which caused him to make a comment on the fate of the Catholic Mary Stuart. However, the north had been unstable for so long that both Burghley and Walsingham kept it under continual surveillance and Lok may well have seen service either within Scotland or on the border during the previous years. Certainly for the next few years Scotland would become his main field of operation. It would prove to be the arena of his greatest social success, and provide the reasons for his precipitate fall.

Sojourn in Scotland

God gives not Kings of the stile of Gods in vaine

James I²⁶

Scotland in the latter decades of the 16th century

²⁵SP Scottish, 1509-1603, p. 1015.

²⁶"Sonnet to Prince Henry," New Poems by James I of England, ed. A. F. Westcott (1911; rpt. New York: Ams Press, Inc., 1966), p. 65.

was, and had been for many years, a scene of factiousness and bloody feuds. James VI, born in 1566 and king at the age of thirteen months, was to be successively a pawn of regents and the hostage of ambitious men. While in England local loyalty had almost entirely given way to a central nationalism with recognized regional interests, Scotland was still engaged in the old tribal warfare. Plot and counter-plot, murder and counter-murder were frequent as nobles fought for possession of the living body of their king as a symbol of their right to hold power. When religious sectarianism was injected into this maelstrom the possibilities for any settled peace in Scotland receded even further into the distance. For Queen Elizabeth Scottish affairs were a recurring nightmare. The fear of an invasion of England through Scotland, when a French- or Spanish-aided army might find adherents amongst the northern Catholic lords, was the main source of worry. Mary Queen of Scots, a prisoner in England, was the magnet who attracted many ambitious and foolhardy men to risk their lives to restore what they saw as legitimacy to the Throne. James, whose own present and future were predicated on the continued imprisonment of his mother, was ambivalent in his attitude, and this worried Elizabeth. Time and again throughout the 1580s and 1590s she strove to obtain his support, or at the very least to ensure his neutrality. In 1585-86 she made James a pensioner, paying him a yearly

sum for his loyalty. This arrangement naturally had to be renegotiated after the Babington plot of 1586 and the execution of Mary in 1587; but James remained true enough to his main interests to show publicly his support of England in her great struggle against Spain. He welcomed the defeat of the Armada with a sonnet which opens with the line, "The nations banded gainst the Lord of might," continues with a description of the "monstrous array" which encountered wind and "foming waves," and ends with the reason given by contemporary Englishmen for the overthrow of Philip's sea-borne host. Though subjects of a politic Queen, who when the treacherous overtures made by her courtiers to Mary were revealed to her held her tongue and took no action against them, the men of '88 were also subjects of an omnipotent God who had no such need of prudence. They were therefore delighted to own their debt to the bluff Almighty even as they acknowledged with pride the skill of His viceregent: as David Lloyd neatly puts it, "Video et rideo, is Gods Motto upon Affronts; Video et taceo, was Queen Elizabeths;"²⁷ and to that delight James's concluding couplet gives the succinct expression, "But how were all these things miraculous done? God laught at them out of his heavenly throne."²⁸

²⁷Lloyd, p. 566.

²⁸Westcott, p. 63.

But, if James wanted to keep his own Throne, as well as gain the glittering prize he had waited for all his life, the Throne of England, he had to balance the factions in his kingdom. Too much favour shown to the Catholic lords might cause Elizabeth, who, wisely, had never stated a preference for any of the contenders for her throne, to name a successor, and that one not himself. On the other hand, too close an alliance with England and Protestantism could upset either France or Spain, as well as some of the exiled Englishmen on the continent who looked to a new King and a new reign to end their foreign sojourn. They too might turn to other and more congenial aspirants, perhaps Arbella Stuart. Unfortunately James, much younger than Elizabeth, and not a tenth as skilled in balancing the national equilibrium, appeared to zig-zag from one extreme to another. Worse, he forgave and released conspirators with such alacrity that they mistook leniency for weakness and saw it as a licence for new plots. In 1589 letters between Scotland and Spain were intercepted by the Queen's agents. They seemed to show that the Scottish lords were contemplating invasion of England with the help of Spain. The Queen first sent James a sharp reminder of the dangers of his policies and told him to put his affairs in order, most notably to control his wayward lords, reminding him that "living weeds in fields, if they be suffered, will quickly overgrow the corn; but subjects being dandled will

make their own reins and forlett [sic] another rein."²⁹ Her good advice had little effect as James appeared more and more to lend his support to the Catholic faction, mainly because they shared his hatred of the earl of Bothwell. Much has been written about this violent man, a nephew of the Bothwell who had abducted and married Mary Queen of Scots, an outlaw and a renegade, but nevertheless a symbol in Scotland, albeit a flawed one, of Protestant hegemony. At first a royal favourite, he had as a result of his erratic conduct become an object of royal hatred. More important, the King also feared Bothwell, thinking that he was in league with witches and supernatural forces which he could use to destroy him. James's unhealthy interest and belief in witchcraft was but another facet of his religious nature, but the very real terror these beliefs inspired was enough to make his hatred and fear of Bothwell verge on the hysterical. Meanwhile the accompanying leaning towards the Catholic earls was causing great worry in England. It is perhaps a measure of the Queen's exasperation that she contemplated using such a man as Bothwell (for she never really supported him) as a counterweight to the influence of the Catholic faction. However, she and Burghley obviously decided that, distasteful as the task might be, some form of covert aid to Bothwell was necessary.

²⁹HMC Salisbury Papers, XIII, 410.

One of the instruments chosen to initiate this policy was Henry Lok.

We do not have to seek far for reasons why Henry Lok was sent as intermediary between Scotland and England. Apart from his obvious experience as an intelligencer, there was the important point of his literary interests. Phoebe Sheavyn, in her discussion of writing and writers in the Elizabethan period, reminds us that, because the ideal courtier selon Castiglione's Il Cortegiano "had to be skilled in writing rime and prose in the vulgar tongue," many gentlemen in the court of Elizabeth practised the art of versifying.³⁰ She continues this theme by sketching a picture of "a miniature solar system" of poets and writers revolving around the person of the Queen. She divides them by degree and influence into the following classes: there were the "close satellites" who were there in their own right by virtue of their noble birth and high office (Essex, Fulke Greville, Raleigh, Sidney, and the earl of Oxford were in this group); then there were "lesser courtiers" (such as Chapman, Daniel, and Fraunce); beyond this lay "outer satellites" (like Shakespeare, Drayton, Webster, Marlow, Lodge and others); and Miss Sheavyn even

³⁰ P. Sheavyn, The Literary Profession in the Elizabethan Age (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), p. 9.

continues outwards through Green, Peele, and Nashe, to the hack writers with little or no social status. Of these men, no matter what their artistic and social class, Sheavyn comments, "The world they all lived in was so small that they all knew each other and were, in some sense, rivals,"³¹ and to them, perhaps somewhere on the periphery between the "lesser courtiers" and the "outer satellites," one should add Lok. He must have exchanged his work for theirs as they passed round the Court in manuscript form, and have indulged in the regular exercise of copying choice items into his commonplace book. For some years James too had been the sun in a minor poetic galaxy of his own, and when Burghley was casting around for a skilled agent with versifying tendencies to send to Scotland, Lok's name was surely in the forefront of those deemed suitable.

James's interest in poetry had begun in his late teens and was fostered by Alexander Montgomerie, a Scottish poet of note and an intimate of the King. James found the study and writing of verse a comfort during the quiet spells between palace revolts. In 1587 a visit by the French poet Du Bartas, whose work had influenced the King's style, and whose poetry the King admired because its subject matter ran to Biblical themes, caused James to launch forth in long narrative verse in honour of the poet.³² But

³¹Sheavyn, p. 128.

³²Printed in New Poems, ed. Westcott, p. 54 et seq.

Du Bartás had a political as well as a poetical reason for his visit. As a devout reformer he came to urge James to marry Catherine de Bourbon, sister of the Protestant Henry of Navarre. By coincidence the English poet and Catholic convert, Henry Constable, arrived at James's Court in 1589 to try to influence the king towards friendship with Arbella Stuart, that cousin of James's whom Catholics advanced as claimant to the throne of England. (James would eventually make what looked at the time to be a Protestant match with the crypto-Catholic Anne of Denmark). Like Du Bartas's, Constable's talent for poetry was a greater asset than his diplomatic aims, and he stayed on to enhance the King's circle. Yet another poeticizing agent, William Fowler, was in the Scottish Court to look after Walsingham's interests.³³ James, whose pedantry was always in competition with his learning, welcomed the intellectual discussion generated by his growing group of poetic satellites to the extent that, as Westcott suggests, "scholarship was considered a key to royal favour." He continues, "foreign governments recognized this in their choice of representatives; such men as Du Bartas, Sir Edward and Sir Henry Wotton, Sir Robert Sidney, Constable and Locke all ... visited Scotland."³⁴

³³C. Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham (1925; rpt. Archon Books, 1967), II, 194, 201, 377, 379.

³⁴Westcott, p. xliii.

When he arrived in Scotland around 1590 Lok had a twofold mission. The first was, if possible, to restore Bothwell to the King's favour; the second, to retain Bothwell as the Queen's friend in the Scottish Court, while restraining him from further acts of violence. A difficult task if not an impossible one. But for Lok, a veteran of fifteen years in the intelligence service, it must have seemed the great chance to work at last in the centre of events to help his country, and incidentally to make his fortune. At this time also, though of course remaining a "Cecil man," he exchanged his old patron, Lord Burghley, for his son and heir apparent in government, Robert Cecil. From henceforth his letters would be addressed to the younger Cecil.

Henry Lok seems to have entered into the spirit of the poetic coterie without any difficulty. Indeed he was so successful that in 1591, together with Constable and Fowler, he was chosen to write a laudatory sonnet to be appended to His Majesties Poetical Exercises at vacant heures. Lok's sonnet, like the others, is extremely flattering to the King. The first two quatrains tell of Alexander the Great's sorrow at having no new worlds to conquer because his father had conquered them all; he links this theme in the third quatrain to the contemporary poet's need for "new Muses" to enable him to imitate the King's talent. The final couplet, if Lok did but

know it, had a prophetic ring:

I, like the flie, that burneth in the flame,
Should shew my blindness to attempt the same.³⁵

Henry Lok was flying much too close to a very dangerous flame and he would indeed get burned. However, at the time all seemed to be going well. While ingratiating himself with the King, he had not neglected his intelligence duties. He worked well with Robert Bowes, the ambassador (brother-in-law to Knox), and reestablished acquaintanceship with others he had known in England, including Sir Robert Carey and Lord Zouche, who were also envoys at the Court. Almost at once Lok discovered a weak link in the chain of information between London and Edinburgh. In April 1591 Bowes informed Cecil that a letter supposedly written by Zacharias Lok (Henry Lok's cousin employed by Robert Carey's father, Lord Hunsdon) was a forgery. Henry Lok knew his cousin's writing and did not recognize the hand the letter was written in.³⁶ By May Lok was being sent to London on one of his innumerable journeys to report personally to Cecil. Bowes writes that Lok knows the perpetrator of the forgery; unfortunately he does not commit the name to paper so we never find out who the culprit was. Included in Lok's report to Cecil would be the tale of the trial for witchcraft of Barbara Napier, one of the supposedly infernal

³⁵Printed in A. Grosart's Miscellanies of Fuller Worthies Library (1871; rpt. New York: AMS Press Inc., 1970), II, 389.

³⁶SP Scottish, 1589-93, p. 508.

creatures in league with Bothwell against the King.

Bothwell, meanwhile, had been up to his usual antics. Besides prowling the Scottish border, marauding and causing general havoc, he had again, despite his "arrangement" with Elizabeth, tried to kidnap the King. He failed in the attempt and was now more or less an outlaw. This called for subtle measures on the part of Elizabeth if she wished to retain her protege, and at the same time avoid antagonizing James. In London, Henry Lok was given a long and detailed letter of instruction from the Queen containing a point-by-point explanation of what he must say to Bothwell. The letter is a masterpiece in the art of keeping equilibrium with each point counterpoised by its antithesis. The problem was that really no one but the Queen herself could possibly convey the exact nuance of the letter. Lord Burghley, himself no mean practitioner of the art of saying one thing and meaning another, had, after years of practice, become adept at translating the intricacies of his mistress' mind. But, if Lok lacked experience in putting into action the Queen's personal diplomacy, it was balanced by his enthusiasm and confidence.

The letter opens with a statement that it will be incumbent on Lok to explain to Bothwell what the Queen has "misliked and liked in him for his late actions."³⁷ She

³⁷The following paraphrase and quotations come from the letter of Elizabeth to Henry Lok: Instructions for Bothwell, Aug. 23, 1593, SP Scottish, 1593-95, pp. 157-58.

then immediately states her dislike of his attacks on the King because "it is to be held as a general rule that the persons of Kings are sacred, representing the Majesty of God here on earth against which no violence may be permitted." In expanding on this theme the Queen lets Bothwell know that she is aware of all his attacks on James's house or person, and upon his servants too. In the latter case she suggests that, before taking the King's servants prisoners, he should have informed their master of the charges against them. In short, he should have gone through proper channels. The Queen castigates Bothwell for his border incursions, singling out not so much the actual physical damage done, but rather the political mischief resulting from his actions. She explains that they cause the world "to think unfavourably of our friendship for the King," and cause her own border subjects to be "less curious in their duties." After the scolding come her reasons for liking the earl, which include his offers to serve her, his submission to the King, and "the services he intends to do against the Papist traitors." Finally and most important, she couples the King's safety with the suppression of the Spanish party, and suggests that Bothwell and like-minded personages so behave that the King will "use them as good patriots." By the same post the Queen wrote to Ambassador Bowes about letters she had received from the King, "by which he pretends to inform us of the truth of

the late incident fallen out there."³⁸ She then gives him a resume of the orders to Lok, states again her absolute horror of any attack on the King, but says that Bothwell has no "evil intention." She names the various earls who are against "the enemies of religion" and says that they will be paid 4000 crowns to "maintain some small forces for a few months" with which to "chastize the Spanish party." All of this, of course, must be kept secret from the King. She then suggests that Bowes get in touch with Bothwell and his cohorts and, after using "some round speech in our name," get them to ratify "by their handwriting" their commitments to her. In effect the Queen had set up and was paying for a faction to look after her interests within James's kingdom. Unfortunately her chief instrument was the unstable Bothwell whose actions seemed too often to be predicated on the whim of a moment.

But these intrigues were part of normal experience in high-level diplomacy and no doubt Henry Lok was well able to play his double role of poet-companion in the King's circle, and intermediary between the Queen and Bothwell. Amongst the group of poets and poetasters in the Court was one whose name now begins to appear more frequently in the secret correspondence between Scotland and England. John Colville, a Scot, and a one-time presbyterian minister of

³⁸ SP Scottish, 1593-95, pp. 153-155.

no great religious reputation, had been working for the English cause for several years. In 1591 he had been a member of the Bothwell gang that attacked Holyrood palace and tried to seize the King. However, after an ostentatious show of repentance, when he had fallen on his knees before the King and craved his pardon, he was received back into James's favour. The only constant in his character appeared to be his dedication to the ideal, if not the practice of Protestantism. This and his apparent ability to rebound into royal favour after the most disastrous fall, made him a useful tool in James's Court.³⁹ Colville's pretensions to poetry are illustrated by his oft used description of Cecil as his "honorabill Mecenas." This man seems to have attached himself to Lok, though one cannot imagine that the latter had much in common with the histrionic Colville. However, Colville's powers of self-advertisement were such that the world gave their relationship a greater intimacy than I think it really had. Robert Cecil, writing to his father in 1598, long after Lok had left Scotland, suggests that Lok can decipher Colville's letters because they are "sworn brothers." This phrase has a distinctly Colvillian ring (as far as is known there were no family ties linking Colville with Lok) and one feels that the fraternity was stronger on his side than on Lok's. Indeed, in one letter

³⁹For information on Colville, see SP Scottish, 1589-93, pp. 697, 742, 751, 802. Also article in DNE.

Colville chides Lok for the brevity of his style: "I beseech you, good brother, be not so 'satcinct' in your letters, but as you would wish me to enlarge every material point, let me have the like."⁴⁰ Lok probably resigned himself to Colville's overtures: as a member of the Scottish Court he had to consort with a variety of men, Catholic and Protestant, God-fearing or dissolute: and at least Colville was amusing.

Meanwhile his own resolute Protestantism found an outlet in religious sonneteering, and it was probably the experience as a recognized and honoured poet within the King's circle that gave him the confidence to offer them for publication. At any rate the first edition of his Sundry Christian Passions contained in 200 Sonnets appeared in 1593. Lok's private theological interests must have allowed him to engage in some direct discussion with the King whose own religious knowledge was extensive. Willson tells us that "James received a thorough grounding in theology, especially Calvinistic theology, and had a fondness for the argumentative solution of high theological reasoning."⁴¹ Thus passed five years, with Lok dividing his interest between the intellectual pursuits of the King's

⁴⁰ HMC Salisbury Papers, IV, 524.

⁴¹ D. H. Willson, King James VI and I (London: Jonathan Cape, paperback ed. 1963), p. 24.

circle, and secret intercourse with Bothwell and others of his ilk.

Trayel was the one constant feature of Lok's life and he must have made the long and uncomfortable journey to London and back dozens of times in those years. Muriel St. Clare Byrne has given us a vivid picture of the hazards of the Queen's highway at this period.⁴² It is probable that Lok experienced most of them. Speed was essential in his work, and besides using several post-horses a day to cover the miles as quickly as possible, he probably spent most nights not in what Byrne calls "the great and sumptuous inns" along the way, but catching a fitful sleep in a carrier's cart or in one of the new springless carriages.⁴³ If Lok missed being held up by highwaymen or robbers, falling off a horse seems to have been as great a hazard then as whiplash appears to be today. At least one of his letters to Cecil uses a lame leg as the result of a fall from his horse as an apologetic excuse for not appearing at Court.⁴⁴

⁴²M..St. Clare Byrne, Elizabethan Life in Town and Country (1925; rpt. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1957), pp. 79-91.

⁴³In a note explaining Lady Margaret Hoby's use of a carriage, D. M. Meads mentions the increasing popularity of coaches from 1580 onwards. See Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1930), p. 245, n. 196.

⁴⁴HMC Salisbury Papers, V, 33.

Another discomfort was the unpredictability of English weather. In those days, when highways were almost non-existent, Byrne tells us that only the Roman roads were more or less kept up; the cart-rutted rights of way which were uncomfortably bumpy in dry weather became boggy traps for the wheels of vehicles and the hooves of horses when it rained. Journeys were often delayed by what one of Burghley's correspondents aptly called the "foulness of the season."⁴⁵ One hopes that during his visits to London, perhaps while he was waiting for replies to be drafted to his various messages, Lok managed to get down to the west country now and again to see his mother. She, though an old woman by now, had not spent her declining years in idleness. In 1590 she had published a translation from the French of Jean Taffin's Of the markes of the children of God, and of their comfort in afflictions, which Collinson tells us was originally meant as solace for the oppressed Protestants in the Netherlands but, appearing as it did when Archbishop Whitgift was wreaking havoc on Puritan believers, Anne may well have thought it would soon be necessary in England.⁴⁶ It must have also been during his Scottish sojourn (if the birthdate of 1592 for his presumably eldest son, Henry, is correct) that Lok met and

⁴⁵SP Scottish, 1593-95, p. 65.

⁴⁶Collinson, "The Role of Women," p. 272.

married his wife.

Meanwhile, events in Scotland were as confused as ever. The birth of a son and heir to James in 1594 had seemed to unite the Scots for a time, but things soon returned to their normal disorder. The King had now begun to suspect that Elizabeth's dealings with him were not as straightforward as she pretended. John Colville, in describing how it was for the English in the Scottish Court, sycophantically quotes Cecil's own words on the subject when he writes to him of "the constant inconstancy of our estate." This is itself a paraphrase of a line from the King's sonnet on women's inconstancy, "That in inconstance Thou art constant still."⁴⁷ In this context it is worth recording that, as Westcott tells us, the fact that several of the poets in James's Court were also envoys "helps explain the rapidity with which literary tendencies passed from one country to another at this period."⁴⁸ However, the spreading of culture was not a first priority amongst the English agents at that precise moment. Bothwell, still an outlaw roaming the border, had asked the Queen for more money, giving as an excuse the increase in the power of the Spanish party. James wrote to Elizabeth to remind her that he had always fulfilled his part of their agreement to deal with

⁴⁷Westcott, p. 6.

⁴⁸Westcott, p. xliii.

factionalism within their respective borders. Lord Zouche was given the task of denying that the Queen was either supporting or hiding Bothwell. To no avail. The King, in "some passion," was casting around for an immediate and suitable scapegoat upon whom he could vent his royal wrath in lieu of those he knew to be the real culprits. His eye lighted upon Henry Lok. Ambassador Bowes was informed that the King knew he had "received very lately into his house Mr. Locke who was a great soliciter for Bothwell and other rebels."⁴⁹ Lok, when told of the accusation, tried a familiar Colville ploy; Zouche describes how he presented himself before the King, pleading innocence and offering himself for trial. The King not only dismissed him, telling him he was his "great enemy," but suggested that the English ambassador examine his own "safe conduct."⁵⁰ Then came a flurry of events. Letters skimmed back and forth; the Queen ordered her border Wardens to "stand upon their defence only but not to stir in any part of Scotland."⁵¹ Cecil tells Lok that the Queen has commanded her ambassador to "utterly disavow that vile imputation that she should encourage any man to offer dishonour to the King's person."

⁴⁹SP Scottish, 1593-95, p. 290.

⁵⁰SP Scottish, 1593-95, pp. 289-92, part of a long letter from Lord Zouche to Burghley, 12 March, 1593/94.

⁵¹SP Scottish, 1593-95, p. 297.

He ends, "I pray you look well to yourself and to all your papers and believe that the King will be well provided for any such attempt."⁵² By return Lok, who obviously felt endangered, asks that a special mark be put on his letters so that he would know they were from Cecil.⁵³ But Lok's days in Scotland were numbered his presence could only exacerbate an increasingly worsening situation. In April 1594 Bothwell led his final raid against the King and failed. His estates were forfeited and would later fall into other hands. He tried one last gambit and joined the Catholic earls, but this caused the Kirk to turn against him. By the following year he would be in exile, never to return. James, with the growing support of the soundly Protestant middle-class element in his realm, who were sick unto death of noble butchery, marched against the Catholic earls and defeated them. The next eight years would not be without incident, but they would be quiet by comparison to the previous twenty, and James would wait out his time until he became King of England in comparative peace.

Lok left Scotland some time in the early summer of 1594 and continued as intermediary agent for Scotland in London. He wrote to Cecil in mid-May to discuss the rumours of peace between Bothwell's men and the King.

⁵²SP Scottish, 1593-95, p. 299.

⁵³SP Scottish, pp. 306-07.

Until now we have had no real example of Lok's epistolary mode, due mainly to the fact that he delivered so many of his messages in person. The following excerpt, then, should be seen as a fairly representative example of the normal tone and style of his letters:

As for Bothwell's and their peace making so soon or so dishonourably, I would not believe, though jealously of Her Majesty's security and experience of the universal looseness and inconstancy of that nation do persuade much, and therefore I leave it to your wisdom to consider of, myself much musing at and mistrusting the silence of Mr. J. Col and Bothwell since Forret's departure.⁵⁴

This sort of sensible comment, based on personal knowledge of the people involved, while leaving the judgement of events to his patron, is typical of Lok.

Colville had remained in Scotland and was as loquacious as ever, sending a stream of letters south "to my loving brother Mr. Herrie Lok," and to his "honorabill Meceenas."⁵⁵ But events were catching up with him too. By August he was accused in Scotland of being "too desirous to come up."⁵⁶ This time there was no royal pardon forthcoming and he soon had to leave Scotland. He was never restored to favour and spent the rest of his life finding what odd jobs he could as an agent for whoever would hire

⁵⁴ HMC Salisbury Papers, IV, 530.

⁵⁵ SP Scottish, 1593-95, p. 331.

⁵⁶ SP Scottish, 1593-95, p. 424.

him.

Lok, on the other hand, still in London, still working as an intermediary in Scottish affairs, seems to have had hopes of returning to that country. Perhaps the memories of the pleasant hours spent in theological discussion and poetical dalliance in James's Court prevented him from seeing the events that occurred during his final months in Scotland in their true light. Perhaps he genuinely believed that James, once the threat of Bothwell was removed, would accept the overall "correctness" of the Queen's policy against the Catholic earls. Did Lok himself feel that he had become persona non grata? The idea that he should be permanently blamed because the King of Scotland and the Queen of England had had a temporary falling-out does not seem to have entered his head. On the contrary, he appears to have had hopes of moving to a higher echelon in the Scottish branch of foreign affairs. He must have known that Robert Bowes, who had already been granted a leave of absence from his post, was most reluctant to return to what henceforth would be a more than usually difficult situation for him personally. It seems that Lok felt that he was eminently suited to take his place. Roger Aston, an Englishman in the Scottish service, wrote to Bowes in November 1594 to tell him that a certain Wigmore and Lok were "striving for the place of ambassador;" he adds, "I doubt not but her majesty is wiser than to

employ such as will not be able to serve."⁵⁷ His faith in his Queen's political acumen was not mistaken, and no more was heard of Lok's ambassadorial pretensions.

At about this time Robert Cecil was the recipient of a gift from a Mr. William Dundas of Pingask who wrote:

At my last being in London, it was told me by Mr. Lok that your honour likes well to have for a gallery of yours there some pictures 'of such toys' as he had seen painted here in Edinburgh during his abode in this country.⁵⁸

Henry Lok was following to the letter the advice his old patron Lord Burghley had dispensed to his son. The pictures, which had cost him nothing, (unless he surreptitiously reimbursed Dundas) would be "daily" in sight, a constant reminder to Cecil of his faithful agent. He was also looking around for a likely sinecure or office as a well-merited reward for what he honestly believed to have been a difficult assignment well done.

Floating Fortune

That all in vaine man strives to keepe his state,
When dangerous stormes labour it to abate.
That vainly men doe boast of Fortune's fauors,
Since like a weather-cocke shee always wauers.⁵⁹
E. W. Lines from "Thameseidos."

When Henry Lok was recalled from Scotland in 1594

⁵⁷SP Scottish, 1593-95, p. 484.

⁵⁸SP Scottish, 1589-93, p. 377.

⁵⁹Select Poetry, ed. E. Farr (1845; rpt. Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), II, 358.

and settled in London to continue his work as intermediary between Cecil and his Scottish agents, there is no doubt that he felt that these would be the final months of his life in active service. He had been working for the Cecils for twenty years, most of the time in foreign countries or in constant travel. It is true that somehow during his sojourns in England he had managed to court and marry a wife, and father several children. But the domestic interludes must have been few and far between, and the desire to become once more a resident Englishman very great indeed.

Because of his long absences from England on Cecil business, Henry Lok had been relatively cut off from the religious disputes which occurred in his country during the latter half of the century. Of course the great political events resulting from domestic and foreign Catholic attempts to destroy Protestantism in England -- the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, the defeat of the Armada -- were as significant to him as they were to all of Elizabeth's reflective subjects, whatever their religious or political opinions, or wherever they lived. In the same context the Catholic attempt mounted in the 1580s to subvert the kingdom from within by the use of native sons rigorously trained at Douai or Rome as Jesuit priests and smuggled back into England, would be of particular political interest to Lok as he made his journeys back and forth from the continent, or travelled to Scotland through the heavily Catholic

northern counties. But the domestic events which were of especial interest to the godly were Archbishop Whitgift's onslaught on those who wanted a presbyterian form of Protestantism, or expression of his determination to make all Protestants conform to a church ceremonial based on the Book of Common Prayer, and the suppression of public prophesyings, which were considered by the Puritans as an essential tool in the education of their members. All of these events, which had caused so much heart-searching and heartbreak amongst the godly, had occurred while Lok was about and abroad for Cecil. He had, perhaps, been too involved in Scottish affairs to react to the scandal and amusement provoked by the indecorous Marprelate tracts and the subsequent appearance before the Court of Star Chamber of important Puritan leaders. He may have had something to say about the execution of those proselytizing extremists, Barrow, Greenwood, and Penry especially the latter, whom James had expelled from Scotland at Elizabeth's insistence after he had sought asylum there. But we have no record of where Lok stood on these matters. In his political missives to the Cecils Lok reveals that his Protestantism took the form of personal belief rather than public challenge. Apart from a reference to a certain person as being inclined to "our reformation"⁶⁰ in one of his letters to

⁶⁰ HMC Salisbury Papers, XII, 185.

Cecil, his private beliefs do not intrude into his professional life. It is only later, when the content of his letters to Cecil changes from the political to a recounting of his personal woes, that Biblical analogies and Puritan imagery begin to become a regular feature of his correspondence. At all events Lok was away from England most of the time during the great confrontation that destroyed the classis movement and eventually sent Puritanism back to private practice in the home, and such regional enclaves that afforded refuge and support to the godly. To a large extent, the English Puritanism he found on his return in 1594 was not unlike that practised in 1559 when he returned with his mother from Geneva. Once more the godly were in public disarray, and, as Hill tells us, turned to "individual pietism," with the "high priest" of the "new Puritanism," William Perkins, emphasizing the importance of "preaching, household discussion and education, and the sanctity of the Sabbath."⁶¹ Of course the analogy is by no means a perfect correspondence. The long years of fruitful work by Puritan zealots, most notably in education both at the lower levels in the home and the day schools and in the Universities, had produced a much larger group of knowledgeable and dedicated people who were Puritan or Puritan-inclined than existed when Elizabeth had first come to the throne.

⁶¹C. Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England (Panther History edn., 1969), p. 486.

Furthermore, the continual setting-up and maintenance of Puritan lectureships where both incumbent and itinerant preachers might spread the Word, meant that, despite the temporary silence caused by the calling in of preaching licences in 1565, "there were more preachers of Puritan doctrine in England at the close of her [Elizabeth's] reign of forty-four years than there had been at the beginning."⁶² However, the Puritans were, as they always had been, a minority within the body politic and tended to cluster together for comfort and mutual protection. And at this time in particular it was important to know and be able to trust one's neighbours. Therefore we must imagine that Lok, though not apparently involved personally in religious controversy, like so many of his co-believers evidently felt happier living amongst people of his own kind. But the London he returned to was not the London of his youth. The old street-by-street neighborhoods were giving way to larger entities. They were still represented to a large extent by the precisian stalwarts of the great companies, but the interests of a growing cosmopolitan world capital were enforcing their own pragmatic priorities. With the death of Leicester the Court had lost what Collinson calls "the political foundations of Elizabethan

⁶²W. Haller, Elizabeth I and the Puritans (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964), p. 37.

puritanism."⁶³ At the same time, the demise of such prominent courtiers as Sir Walter Mildmay in 1589 and the earl of Warwick and Sir Francis Walsingham in 1590 had further decimated the ranks of Puritan sympathizers at Court. Finally, though Elizabeth's Court continued the custom of making frequent progresses, Muriel St. Clare Byrne notes that,

the Court in her reign may be said finally to have lost its original migratory character. It became once and for all essentially associated with and situated in London.⁶⁴

One result of the new importance of London was a natural tendency for the all-pervading official Anglicanism to replace the pocket boroughs of Puritanism, replete with godly lecturers and rented pulpits, which Lok had known in his youth. Indeed Collinson tells us that "the days were now past when London was an open city for puritan extremists."⁶⁵ Lok's mother had long ago moved to Exeter where we now leave her living out her life in what we may hope was material and spiritual comfort. For the west country was one of the chief regional refuges for the godly and Devon and Cornwall were the county bases of the families of several of Lok's personal friends at Court. It is no

⁶³P. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, p. 387.

⁶⁴Byrne, Elizabethan Life, p. 45.

⁶⁵P. Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, p. 405.

wonder, then, that Henry Lok's first efforts should be directed towards obtaining a post in that part of England. In 1595 we find him writing to Cecil to remind him of "her Majesty's pleasure and past promise" to himself, and to suggest his candidacy for the post of the Collector of the Tents at Exeter. He appends a note with a list of "twenty-two esquires, gentlemen merchants of Dorsetshire, Devonshire and Cornwall" who will stand as surety for him⁶⁶ and avows, "I will put in as good security as any in these parts."⁶⁷ Thus it was that Henry Lok started his long and fruitless meander through the maze of Elizabethan place-hunting. The desperate seeking of reward for his years of service would consume a great part of the rest of his life; therefore it is incumbent upon us to look more closely at this subject.

W. T. MacCaffrey has given us a detailed picture of how patronage worked in Elizabethan times.⁶⁸ In his article he links the types of patronage to the various classes in society, the more lucrative rewards tending to be given to people high in the social scale. They range all the way from such sinecures as being on the royal payroll and receiving a pension or annuity in addition to or in lieu of

⁶⁶SP Dom., 1595-97, 13.

⁶⁷HMC Salisbury Papers, V, 34.

⁶⁸MacCaffrey, pp. 95-126.

wages, to obtaining the grant of a monopoly to import, export or trade in a certain commodity and continue on down the social and patronage scale from land leases, patents and small pensions, to the bargain-basement area of the selling of influence or service, and small hand-outs from erstwhile patrons. He makes the point that, though Elizabeth put some order into the distribution of royal favours, the system, because "it lacked adequate safeguards against a free-for-all scramble for spoils" had severe defects.⁶⁹ Thus, when Henry Lok in 1595 cast about him for a government post suitable in scope and money-making opportunities to keep himself and his growing family in an honourable manner, he was entering an already overcrowded market. Even a cursory glance at the correspondence of any minister in Elizabeth's government reveals a preponderance of begging letters: noblemen asking for monopolies, parents seeking places for their children, petitioners for wardships, and old retainers reminding a patron of past services. They piled up on the tables in the outer rooms to be put in order of visibility by the great one's clerk. The important thing was to have one's letter near the top of the heap so that the Queen or the minister involved might see it soon, before they got bored or exasperated by the seemingly endless importuning.

⁶⁹MacCaffrey, p. 125.

At the beginning of Henry Lok's long quest he must have had few doubts about the placement of his own letters. He knew most of the clerks personally, and a small coin would grease a palm sufficiently to allow it to slip his request into position for speedy attention. As for the range of offices available to him, did not his patrons, the Cecils, father and son, between them control the two greatest sources of patronage the Treasury and the Court of Wards? In the case of the Exeter collectorship one also remembers the twenty-one sponsors from the west country, solid citizens, probably friends and neighbours of the worthy Mr. Prowse and his mother, who were willing to welcome him into their community. There seemed no possibility that his suit should fail. But fail it did, and for a reason that is all the more tantalizing because we cannot trace it any farther than Lok's own brief description of what happened. He informs Cecil in August 1595 that he had been arrested for a debt due at midsummer to one Prowse; he thinks it was done out of malice because Prowse's brother could not have the Collectorship himself.⁷⁰ One wonders if the brothers Prowse were relatives of his step-father and jealous of the interloper depriving them of their legitimate spoils. But we hear no more of them. Lok was obviously disappointed by this first failure and, in a

⁷⁰HMC Salisbury Papers, V, 334.

letter to Cecil in April 1596, he "craves the next occasion that arises may be his faith's assay."⁷¹ However, just to make sure that his patron was aware of the importance of his request, he spices his letter with a small hyperbolic phrase of the type usually reserved for such occasions; he reminds Cecil that he remains in "shameful want." Letters late in the year continue the theme. He was being hounded by creditors;⁷² he reminds Cecil of the five years of "negotiation" in Scotland, and of the "travail and expense or peril" he had undergone for his country. Finally he asks for a lease of fifty pounds in reversion for fifty years. George Carey, the new Lord Hunsdon, added weight to the petition by writing a character reference on the back of the letter noting his own experience of Lok's faithful service.⁷³ Almost by the same post Cecil must have received a letter from Zacharias Lok bemoaning the loss of his "honourable lord and master [the late Lord Hunsdon] and fifteen years service of the flower of my time." He too details his "lamentable" case and lack of money. "I am a man utterly overthrown of all others that ever served in her Majesty's Court of my rank the most miserablest" [sic].⁷⁴

⁷¹HMC Salisbury Papers, VI, 137.

⁷²Salisbury, VI, 238.

⁷³Salisbury, VI, 567.

⁷⁴Salisbury, VI, 296.

Cecil did his best for both Loks: Zacharias obtained a place in the House of Commons, and for Henry Lok he suggested a pension of one hundred pounds per annum, double the amount asked for, and a lease of land.⁷⁵

This perhaps is the time to expand a little on the expectations of a man who was the recipient of government patronage. The greatest patronage cornucopia of all, the Court of Wards, was controlled by Lord Burghley from 1561 and passed to his son Robert on his death. The Court was an essentially feudal appendage which, because of its ability to channel vast profits to the Crown, was retained by Elizabeth long after it had become repugnant to the spirit of the age. In effect it was a great market in human flesh. Every young person of property in the land unfortunate enough to be left fatherless while still a minor became a ward of the Crown through the Court of Wards. The direct result was that his or her property was held in trust until he came of age, or, in the case of a girl, until she was married. The young wards themselves, even if they still had a mother living, were often auctioned off to the highest bidder who, in return for access to their yearly income, promised to provide them with a suitable education. Many kept their promises, probably as many reneged. So terrifying was the prospect of the child

⁷⁵ HMC Salisbury Papers, VI, 567. 9

falling into unscrupulous hands that some parents tried to hedge their bets in case of death before their progeny's majority. Hurstfield tells us that Peregrine Bertie, the son of those old Marian exiles Richard Bertie and the duchess of Suffolk, in his will made in 1599, instructed that 100 pounds be spent on a jewel or other gift for the Queen in the hope that she would grant his wardship to the guardian he had appointed.⁷⁶ Besides human beings the Court also dealt in real estate and its perquisites. The enormous acreages of land in trust in the Court of Wards, or confiscated as the result of legal entanglements, could be leased to various petitioners. Parliamentary seats traditionally held by the family of a ward could be given to deserving or not so deserving supplicants in the interim. As Master of the Court of Wards, Lord Burghley was the chief purveyor of all this richness. He made sure that the Queen got her fair share of the profits from the multiple dealings of the Court, and was not at all averse to taking his own slice of the cake. Opinion on the quality of his stewardship is mixed. Of it Stone says:

Its most objectionable feature was the degree to which the Master of the Court -- for half a century a Cecil, father and son -- granted wardships, often for a fat gratuity, to courtiers, noblemen,

⁷⁶J. Hurstfield, The Queen's Wards (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958), p. 70.

and officials, regardless of the interest of the child and its relatives, or even of the Crown.⁷⁷

But Joel Hurstfield, whose definitive book on the subject is by no means gentle to the system or to its administrators, admits that "Lord Burghley was a careful and patient judge and more than one poor ward had cause to be grateful for the shelter of the Court he ruled."⁷⁸ What is not in doubt is that, as with everything else he did, Lord Burghley took his stewardship seriously. In an age when corruption was often seen as mere self-interest, he modified his own and other peoples' greed, and tried to imbue the prospective guardian with the right attitude towards the interests of a ward. However, despite either its merits or its disadvantages, as we shall see in our narrative, the Court of Wards was often the first and the last source of rescue turned to by citizens of all classes.

But to return to the subject of Lok's future income, what sort of reward was the one-hundred-pound annuity Cecil would seek to secure from the Queen for his agent? Once more MacCaffrey presents us with good examples of the variety and value of monetary grants at the time: Lord Buckhurst, "a prime favourite," got 200 pounds a year; Sir Robert Constable's £46 13s 4d per annum equalled his wages.

⁷⁷L. Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) p. 601.

⁷⁸Hurstfield, p. 216.

as a gentleman pensioner; and Sir George Howard, master of the armoury, received £133 6s 8d a year beyond his salary of £30. MacCaffery describes the average pension as "low, rising only rarely above twenty to thirty pounds a year."⁷⁹ Miss Sheavyn calls fifty pounds a year "no mean income in those days."⁸⁰ Thus we can see that Cecil's suggestion of one hundred pounds per annum for Lok was a goodly sum commensurate with his services to the Crown. If, on the other hand, Lok received the land lease, he would be able to lease it to one or several tenants, or collect rent from the sitting tenants if there were any; in effect he would obtain an income from the lease. The grant of permission to collect a tax such as Lok had sought in the Collectorship of Exeter, provided one with even wider speculative opportunities, but also with a greater chance of failure. The collection of the actual tax gave the office holder access to ready money which, from the time of its receipt until it had to be paid over to the government department involved, might be invested in any way he chose. A. H. Dodd provides us with some examples of the myriad enterprises of a merchant called Myddelton whose ability to make cash grow seems

⁷⁹MacCaffrey, p. 115.

⁸⁰Sheavyn, p. 103.

to have been beyond question.⁸¹ Henry Lok, should he be fortunate enough to get a collectorship, might well have emulated one or more of this man's successful enterprises. Myddelton, besides trading in cloth and the accoutrements pertaining to his main business, also invested in the financing of sea voyages; from these speculations, Dodd says, he obtained "fabulous gains lessened by occasional set backs and losses."⁸² But by far the most profitable way of getting a quick return on capital was to lend it out at interest. The question of the morality of money lending was to haunt Protestant business men throughout the century but by the mid-nineties the niceties of the debate had been somewhat obscured by the common custom of lending money at interest. Myddelton not only loaned large sums on the security of a jewel to temporarily impoverished noblemen, he also had more modest clients who borrowed money at a regular rate of ten per cent. Dodd tells us that this obtained "a steady and handsome return on his capital without the ups and downs of foreign commerce or 'adventures in reprisall'."⁸³ Thus, had Henry Lok got his desired slice of the patronage cake, managed his small prize carefully.

⁸¹A. H. Dodd, "Mr. Myddelton of Tower Street," Elizabethan Government and Society, ed. Bindoff et al., pp. 249-281.

⁸²Dodd, p. 255.

⁸³Dodd, p. 264.

and convinced himself that lending money was not incompatible with either gentility or morality, he might have looked forward to a comfortable life for himself and his family. But this, for the time being anyway, was not to be; 1596 gave way to 1597 with the only new event in Lok's life being the announcement to Cecil that he had entered into some law suits and required twenty to thirty pounds to pay fees and fines.⁸⁴

In going to law Lok was merely following the fashion in a particularly litigious age. Rowse tells us of "the great expansion of legal business and of the legal profession" at the time, and suggests as a tentative reason "the instinct, deeply planted in the English, for a certain freedom and a regard for the individual."⁸⁵ Whatever Lok's motivation, his instinct to fight for his rights in Court was one that, at this particular time, it would have been better for him to have repressed. For, apart from the fact that he had no regular form of income and was already being dunned by creditors who suspected that the heyday of his life in Court was over, there was the probability that the law suit begun in 1596 would go on for years. Hurstfield paints a grim picture of the hazards of the game:

⁸⁴ HMC Salisbury Papers, VI, 137.

⁸⁵ A. L. Rowse, The England of Elizabeth (1950; rpt. Cardinal Paperback edn., 1973), pp. 394-95.

The sheer cost of litigation itself could be a threat to an innocent man's purse or an insuperable barrier to his hopes of justice. For a lawsuit, or even the threat of one, might involve not only lawyer's fees, journeys to court, time lost in various ways, but also the mounting cost of the legal documents, pleadings, rejoinders, interrogations, rebuttals which grew to intolerable length as the century wore on.

He continues, "a rich man could be made bankrupt by an indiscriminate indulgence in litigation: a poor man might be harried beyond endurance by the alarming cost of a single law suit."⁸⁶ As we shall see later, Henry Lok was soon engaged in more than a "single" law suit his penchant for using the popular toy of his age leading him to indulge himself with several. We do not know to which case he was referring in his letter to Cecil, but, as by 1602 there was one involving a Somersetshire bookseller called Rhodes, and as this was about the time when a second edition of his Christian sonnets was being prepared for the press, it may have been connected with his literary activities. Whatever it was, and whatever the reason, by embarking on litigation Henry Lok, if he had but known it, was exacerbating his troubles, and law suits would prove to be another source of anguish to him as the years wore on.

Meanwhile he continued to earn some kind of living through his ability to get close to Cecil. No doubt for every letter he delivered, and for every message he relayed, he received a small gratuity from the petitioner. This, and

⁸⁶Hurstfield, pp. 192-93.

the dribblets of money he received from Cecil himself kept him going and enabled him to feed his family. At the same time he did not cease in his search for a place amongst the rewards available, but with little success. In January 1596-7 (a month when the Secretary suffered the greatest grief of his life, the death in childbed of his wife) he gives Cecil a pessimistic account of the situation in the patronage stakes when he tells him that "monopolies are scandalous, reversions of office uncertain, concealments litigious and forfeitures rarely recovered."⁸⁷ As an added inducement to action he uses the name of Lady Warwick, a patron of the Puritans and a woman who, Miss Stenton tells us, had been with the Queen as maid, wife and widow, and who was "more beloved and in greater favour with the Queen than any other woman in the kingdom."⁸⁸ Lok suggests that Cecil should use Lady Warwick's "gracious inclination towards me."⁸⁹ He then adds the weight of the potent name of the elder Cecil to bolster his personal pleas as he continues, "I must beg you to procure your father's allowance in obtaining me some portion of Crown lands, either by lease or fee farm, or some pension until an office becomes

⁸⁷SP Dom., 1595-97, p. 348.

⁸⁸D. M. Stenton, The Englishwoman in History (New York: Macmillan Co., 1957), p. 135.

⁸⁹SP Dom., 1595-97, p. 348.

vacant."⁹⁰ But nothing happens. In June Lok tells Cecil that he "sees days and weeks wearing away," and even goes so far as to remind his patron of the obvious; "have my bill lie in view with others to pass her Majesty's next gracious censure."⁹¹ Then, in August 1597, another collectorship become vacant in Exeter -- or perhaps it was the same one which had never been satisfactorily filled in the first place -- and once again Henry Lok asked for it. It is interesting to note that the diocese of Exeter had had more than its usual share of religious and political problems during the preceding years. Collinson mentions the story of Bishop Woolton of Exeter who had been found dead in his privy in 1594 at about the time he was supposed to deprive of their benefices several erring ministers of the Puritan school. His successor, Bishop Cotton, complained that his diocese was full of Puritans "who followed 'rattle-brained preachers' from town to town."⁹² It is no wonder, then, that the ecclesiastical authorities should want an especially reliable and preferably familiar person to fill the vacant collectorship. In September 1597, in answer to Cecil's request for the post for Lok, the Dean

⁹⁰SP Dom., 1595-97, p. 348.

⁹¹HMC Salisbury Papers, VII, 236.

⁹²Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement, p. 441.

and Chapter of Exeter reply:

On receipt of your letters we did consider how far we might gratify Mr. Henry Locke with safety, but seeing our security was only bonds, and that we cannot understand that Mr. Locke is of sufficiency to answer her Majesty and the church, or of skill to exercise the office, we would ask to have the collection ourselves as the statute ordains, and so shall her Majesty and the church be best served.⁹³

But behind the diplomatic and patriotic language lay more cogent reasons for the refusal. That same month Lok wrote to his patron that his friends had told him that the Dean himself was against him. In the hope of improving his chances he announces that, should he get the position, he would reassign the former deputies to their usual jobs as his assistants, or he would hire Walter Hickman, "one of far better ability and well known in these parts." One realizes, remembering that the Hickmans were probably related to Lok through his paternal grandfather, that there was also a touch of nepotism in his desire to hire Hickman. But the Dean and Chapter are adamant. In October a sharp letter informs Cecil that

bonds are not a sufficient caution, as these will not prevent our livings being sequestered, if the money be not paid, as has happened at Bristol. As for Mr. Locke's assign, he that was last under my Lord B. refuses to deal under him, and we therefore pray to be allowed to keep the collection in our own hands, without granting a patent of collectorship to anyone.⁹⁴

⁹³HMC Salisbury Papers, VII, 382.

⁹⁴HMC Salisbury Papers, VII, 422.

It seems that besides many friends, Henry Lok had one or two strategically placed enemies in the west country. By the end of the year Lok was clutching at the hope of a place in the House of Commons (and the protection from seizure for debt that went with it) should one become vacant in the next session. He was also preparing to go on a journey again, this time on espionage business for Cecil. He seemed to be back on a familiar treadmill.

It was now over four years since his return from Scotland and the much hoped for honourable retirement had not taken place. His pleas to Cecil had been bolstered by the support of such influential people as Lady Warwick, Lord Hunsdon, Sir John Stanhope, and Lord Willoughby; why then did his suits fail? There are several possible explanations. Perhaps his letters asking for various positions were never actually seen by the Queen; in one of his letters to Cecil Lok mentions that a petition left with Lady Warwick, who had given it to Sir John Stanhope, had not been delivered.⁹⁵ If the letters were placed in view, perhaps a lingering sense of discomfort associated with the name Lok caused her Majesty to flick them over quickly and postpone a decision. The combination of insolvency and of being a stranger were sufficient reasons for his not obtaining posts in the west country; we also

⁹⁵Salisbury, VII, 146.

remember that he had enemies there. In effect, both personal circumstances and plain bad luck were equally to blame for Lok's inability to obtain the sort of reward he felt he merited. It may have been of little comfort to him to know that he was not alone in this predicament. Even the great Walsingham, whom the Queen disliked personally because of his too open espousal of the Puritan cause; had been moved to write to Burghley in the 1580s:

But seeing the declining state we are running into, and that men of best desert are least esteemed, I hold them happiest in this government that may be rather lookers on than actors.

My hope is, howsoever I am dealt withal by an earthly Prince, I shall never lack the comfort of the Prince of Princes.⁹⁶

By June of 1598 Lok's financial position was becoming desperate and there is a note of hysteria in his letters. On hearing of the death of Bowes, keeper of the Queen's bears, he writes to Cecil to ask for the post saying, "it is better to be a bear-herd than to be baited daily with great exclamations for small debts." Linking the bestiary imagery to Biblical analogy he continues, "I trust your Honour shall be the happy dove to give token of rest to my floating fortune."⁹⁷ July provided him with another possibility. An aunt of his was in prison, accused of Papist leanings. When she was cleared of heretical tendencies by a priest,

⁹⁶Read, Mr. Secretary Walsingham, III, 169.

⁹⁷SP Dom., 1598-1601, p. 60.

one Barnes, who had been arrested at the same time, Lok seized the opportunity to ask for a lease of his aunt's estate of sixty-eight pounds a year in return for keeping her, and for Barnes's estate of 140 pounds, "in recompense of my services, I would be thankful, and be henceforth less troublesome."⁹⁸ August 1598 saw the death of his old and revered patron, Lord Burghley, and though he had been beholden to the son more than the father for several years, Burghley's going must have been a cause not only for heart-felt grief, but for concern. Who now would remember all his long years of service?

In October 1598 comes the first reference to family troubles. Writing from "my poor cottage at Acton" he says, his delay in arriving at Court had been occasioned by his wife becoming "suddenly and perilously ill." At the same time we note that his expectations now seem to be centered on Cornwall as he reminds Cecil to "solicit Her Majesty for my suits proceeding, especially in the Duchy for such a portion as my past and present services may be thought worthy of."⁹⁹ By 1599 travelling had become a regular feature of his life once more. In March Cecil gave him a gelding which would appear to be a more than welcome present, as well as an augury of future journeys. In

⁹⁸SP Dom., 1598-1601, p. 71.

⁹⁹HMC Salisbury Papers, VIII, 374.

thanking him Lok remarks that he awaits further orders.¹⁰⁰

When they came the further orders took him to his old stamping grounds of southern France and the borders of Spain. Once more it was a particularly difficult time in Anglo-Spanish relations. There were widespread fears that Spain was planning another Armada. A new and dangerous factor was the possibility that Henry IV of France might make a separate peace with Spain and thus leave the dons free to turn all their power against England. Essex, the new star at Court, who had led a punitive expedition to Cadiz in 1596, was vociferously demanding war. Cecil preferred a pattern of diplomacy that would lead, if possible, to lasting peace for all concerned. Lok's task, therefore, was to observe very carefully all that occurred in this sensitive area. His letters contain reports on shipping activities and visitors to both Spain and France; and he mentions at least one secret meeting with another agent in a Spanish abbey "eleven leagues from Pampeluna."¹⁰¹

But somehow the old ardour had gone and Lok appeared to be performing less efficiently than usual. In particular he seemed to have lost the qualities he was most noted for, discretion and obedience to orders. The great Mr. Honiman himself, Cecil's chief agent, wrote from Bayonne to tell

¹⁰⁰ SP Dom., 1598-1601, p. 172.

¹⁰¹ SP Dom., 1598-1601, p. 208.

his master that Henry Lok was in trouble with the local people "for showing discontent at a vessel's bringing corn out of England." They wondered who he was and there was talk of banishing him. Honiman says he had told Lok to leave because he was an unwelcome object of interest there but Lok, after saying he would move, had taken a room in the town.¹⁰²

We can perhaps understand Lok's extreme disquiet at the arrival in France of English corn if we link it to the economic situation in the late 1590s. His attitude can thus once more be shown to place him in the mainstream of the thought of the time. Inflation was the scourge of the sixteenth century and its causes were as little understood by the populace then as they are today. In one sense the Elizabethan condition was worse than our own in that, when it occurred, it was the first time within living memory that people experienced extreme fluctuations in the prices of basic commodities. Outhwaite's interesting study in economic history¹⁰³ shows that through the decades from 1400 to 1700 there were always periods of inflation which receded after a time. However, between 1530 and 1550 the day wages of agricultural workers, craftsmen, and labourers,

¹⁰²SP Dom., 1598-1601, p. 262.

¹⁰³R. B. Outhwaite, Inflation in Tudor and Early Stuart England: Studies in Economic History (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd.).

which had been steady for at least 150 years, began to climb. Outhwaite also informs us that the two steepest periods of inflation occurred in the mid-1540s and the 1590s, the latter date being precisely the period we are now discussing.¹⁰⁴ Scholarly and complicated economic explanations of the real causes of inflation do not concern us here, what is more important and interesting are the explanations put forth by the people at the time.¹⁰⁵ They include placing the blame on land enclosure (especially in the early part of the century) and the consequent depopulation of the villages. Explanations with a familiar twentieth-century ring to them include speculation, the middlemen, government monopolies, and taxation. When all other explanations failed a simple equation was made between high prices and shortage. Thus bad harvests and excessive export of provisions were found to be logical reasons for the increased cost of foodstuffs. Bindoff tells us that "of the last seven harvests of the century, five were very poor, and in the resulting 'dearths' the price of corn rose to unheard-of levels."¹⁰⁶ It is no

¹⁰⁴Outhwaite, p. 13.

¹⁰⁵See Outhwaite's chapter "Contemporary Opinions," pp. 15-23.

¹⁰⁶S. T. Bindoff, Tudor England (Penguin Books, 1950), p. 284.

wonder, then, that Henry Lok, living in straitened circumstances and no doubt feeling the effects of inflation very severely, should be incensed when he saw English corn arriving at a French port. The result of his protests, unfortunately, was to render him useless in Bayonne and he was recalled to England. At about this time he wrote a very apologetic letter to Cecil saying "my attempts at service have been fruitless through fatal negligence." He continues (a little disingenuously considering that he had been in his thirties when the Secretary first gave signs of leadership), "I desire some employment, however mean. I always wished from my tender years to follow you only and will undertake any service, however perilous and charge-able."¹⁰⁷

We next find him living at "the Sign of the Lute in the Strand." Probably his wife and children were still domiciled in Acton, then a village in Middlesex north of London, where the fresh air and better housing conditions gave some protection from the plague which would rage particularly strongly in 1602 and 1603.¹⁰⁸ Lok was actively seeking employment abroad again as a means of "diminishing expenses" and settling affairs, "and with the hope better deserts may cancel former errors." He suggests that he

¹⁰⁷SP Dom., 1598-1601, p. 509.

¹⁰⁸Bindoff, p. 283.

could go to St. Jean de Luz pretending to be in charge of the exchange and ransoming of merchants between England and Spain. "This," he added, "would give me an opportunity of noticing all the passengers."¹⁰⁹ A "Bill of Charges" into France and back presented by Lok in 1600 seems to indicate that he had his wish. The account is worth specifying in some detail because it is in itself a graphic description of a typical espionage journey. It includes five posts to Dover and Back at 7s 6d a post -- "and 6d to guide a small bark to pass over." Then there is the passage back in a "Hollander's man of war," various payments to other agents sent to Tournay and Brussels, and posts for himself on the continent. The final item is "my own charges, 30 nobles at a noble a day" (three nobles equalled one shilling); the total comes to £27 6s 0).¹¹⁰ At about the same time an account by Thomas Honiman of money disbursed for intelligence during the year ending July 1599 shows that three agents, Lambert, Bradshaw, and Lok shared a total of £278 13s 4d.¹¹¹ If Lok received about one third of this amount it would appear that he was being relatively well paid for his services. Handover, in her list of sums paid out to Cecil's agents, says that annual payments varied from 50 to

¹⁰⁹SP Dom., 1598-1601, pp. 509-510.

¹¹⁰HMC Salisbury Papers, X, 456-57.

¹¹¹SP Dom., 1598-1601, p. 246.

to 100 pounds a year, and adds that intelligencing "was a well paid job, since for most of the agents the work was spare time."¹¹² However, Lok, whom we know to have been a full time agent, was probably so deeply in debt at this time, and so involved in his various law suits that he was totally unable to save his disastrous personal financial situation. Very soon he was to have a far worse encounter with the law, the result of a friendly act of good will on his part many years before. The ramifications of this charitable deed would destroy any remaining peace of mind the harassed Lok may still have had. But, before we narrate the story of the final few years of his life, it is necessary to introduce John Killigrew, the character most to blame for the acceleration of Henry Lok's troubles.

John Killigrew came of a well-known Cornish family as famous for its piratical exploits as for the fact that its most distinguished member, Sir Henry Killigrew, brother-in-law to Burghley, was a prominent and respected courtier of Puritan leanings. Buccaneersing was not an unusual occupation in the west country. Its origins lay in English support for the Huguenots against the French Crown during the Wars of Religion when English privateers were given licence by Elizabeth and Cecil to attack French shipping more or less at will. The resultant legalized piracy

¹¹²Handover, p. 264.

increased its sway so that soon Spanish shipping too was constantly under attack; the religious and economic motives for the original decision to attack French shipping becoming inextricably mixed up with greed and the desire for plunder.¹¹³ So prevalent was piracy that Rowse mentions that almost half the cases in the file of Admiralty indictments for 1575-77 are for piracy on the Cornish coast or by Cornish pirates.¹¹⁴ Partly because of their buccaneering activities, and partly because of their treasonable actions against Mary, several of the Killigrews had indeed been Marian exiles; they must have been strange bedfellows for the godly merchants and pious wives who sought a religious Utopia in Europe in the 1550s.¹¹⁵ John Killigrew seems to have divided his time between the Court, where he lived well beyond his means, and piracy and rack-renting in his native Cornwall, until in 1595 the law and his creditors finally caught up with him. In a "Draft of Charges laid

¹¹³Both C. Read in Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961) and R. B. Wernham in Before the Armada (London: Jonathan Cape, 1966) cover the relationship of piracy with the French Wars of Religion.

¹¹⁴Rowse, Tudor Cornwall, p. 390. In this context another connection of the Lok family surfaces. Sir Julius Caesar, né Adelmare, the distinguished Judge of the Admiralty who so often had to investigate these cases, was the son of Mary (or Margaret) Perient who, as the widow of Caesar Adelmare, married Michael Lok.

¹¹⁵C. Garrett, The Marian Exiles (1938; rpt. Cambridge: University Press, 1966), pp. 205-207.

against John Killigrew,"¹¹⁶ we find him accused of a multiplicity of offences ranging from squandering his wife's fortune, oppressing his tenants, and receiving stolen goods, to obstructing the course of justice, consorting with pirates, and defrauding Her Majesty. This inventory of crime and folly might well have embarrassed any man, but John Killigrew in his long and involved answer either has ingenious excuses for his actions or categorically denies the charges.¹¹⁷ It is not difficult to comprehend, when faced with such resolute and self-confident equivocation, why, some fourteen years before, when no doubt Killigrew was living sumptuously at Court on his wife's capital and probably making a great play of his relationship with the worthy Sir Henry, Lok had been foolish enough to act as some kind of guarantor for the man. Now, with Killigrew's own personal chickens coming home to roost, Lok too would receive some unexpected and unwelcome new problems. It was not long of course before the news of Killigrew's fall was common knowledge and his creditors descended to get what pickings they could from his impounded estate. Lok, to whom Killigrew also owed money, wrote from Derbyshire (for he was still constantly travelling) and asked Cecil for a lease of her Majesty's "rich share in Killigrew's

¹¹⁶HMC Salisbury, V, 519-20.

¹¹⁷Salisbury, V, 520-21.

estate" confiscated by the Court of Wards.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately there was another petitioner with the same idea. A certain Nicholas Athow also wrote to ask for a land lease and offered "terms." A note appended to this letter reminds Cecil that, though Killigrew was deeply indebted to Henry Lok, it should be remembered that Athow was offering 100 pounds.¹¹⁹ We do not know if bribery or justice won the day but, since no more is heard of the land lease, we can assume that Athow's money carried more weight than Lok's need.

Meanwhile, in London, Lok was involved in many activities. He was intermediary for letters from Spain where his old acquaintance Bothwell was now living; he suggested that Cecil might use him as an intelligencer. Another and perhaps less welcome figure from the past, John Colville, was also busily conspiring for whoever would pay him.¹²⁰ Lok's list of correspondents at this time also includes an old friend from Scottish days, Lord Zouche; George Nicholson, another old Scottish hand and now ambassador in Edinburgh; and the devious Master of Gray whose loyalties had fluctuated between the Catholic and Protestant cause for years, and who was now in one of his anti-Jacobean phases. Indeed, a letter from Nicholson to

¹¹⁸HMC Salisbury Papers, XI, 391.

¹¹⁹Salisbury, XI, 538.

¹²⁰HMC Salisbury Papers, IX, 123.

Cecil mentions that Lok had been accused of being in the north and in league with Gray against the King. This Cecil vehemently denies, saying, "I affirm upon my religion to God Almighty, as if ever it be proved that he [Lok] hath been twenty miles northward this six months day, I will be contented to be condemned for a villain."¹²¹ Yet, despite this disclaimer we know that Lok had been at least as far as Derbyshire, more than one hundred miles north of London, within the past year; he was obviously deeply involved in Scottish affairs again.

In England the great drama of Essex had drawn to a close. The incredible folly of attempting an armed rising had led at last to his execution. Cecil waxed allegorical as he told a correspondent that the state was quiet, "the tree into which so many branches were incorporated being now fallen."¹²² No doubt Lok was as interested in the fall of Robert Devereux as any in the kingdom, but equally interesting and more important to his personal future were the developments in his own various legal entanglements.

In May 1602 he wrote to Cecil to ask for help in compelling the stationer or bookseller John Rhodes to give him satisfaction for his book.¹²³ He says that Rhodes had

¹²¹ HMC Salisbury, XI, 21-22.

¹²² HMC Salisbury, XI, 229.

¹²³ HMC Salisbury, XII, 150.

"detained his recompense of service" which Lok had "purchased with many painful perils and costly travels." Added to this, Lok told Cecil, Rhodes had "secret friends" at Court, and Rhodes's estate was great whereas his own, because of Rhodes, was "almost miserable."¹²⁴

Besides the law suit against Rhodes, Lok seems to have started another to obtain possession of lands he felt he had been unlawfully deprived of in either Devon or Cornwall. This necessitated further journeys into the west country. A map of Lok's meanderings at this time, therefore, would include not only his regular agential journeys to the Midlands and perhaps further north, but epicyclical detours to Somerset and the western peninsula. But by now the bailiffs were breathing down his neck and a letter to Cecil asking for protection and employment abroad because he was in fear of some restraint on his liberty arrived almost at the time that he was being arrested and thrown into the Clink as surety for Killigrew's debts.¹²⁵ Mrs. Dorothy Killigrew, John's wife, immediately penned a letter to Cecil informing him of the arrest of "my very good friend Mr. Henry Locke" and promising that her husband would pay the "small sum" within fourteen days when he returned from

¹²⁴HMC Salisbury, XII, 150:

¹²⁵HMC Salisbury Papers, XII, 150-51.

Cornwall.¹²⁶ Lok, through Cecil's good offices, was speedily released from jail and in May 1602 he wrote to thank his patron; at the same time he enclosed a statement of his financial estate and once more asked for help.¹²⁷

Within a month of getting out of jail Lok was back in the thick of Scottish affairs again. He tells Cecil of having dined with the Laird of Mackenay, who had "the best wealth of any baron in Scotland" and was allied with most of the greatest in the isles, as well as being more than ordinarily inclined to "our reformation." It seems that the worthy Mackenay had offered his services to the Queen.¹²⁸ At the same time Lok was increasingly uneasy about the progress of his personal affairs. He rightly felt that the scrape with the bailiff's men may well have been only the prelude to worse events. By November of 1602 he was preparing to go abroad again where he would at least be safe from further incarceration.

In the following year, on March 24th, the last day of the old-style year and the eve of Lady Day, the feast of the Virgin she had so effectively replaced in the hearts and minds of most of her subjects, Elizabeth died, and James VI of Scotland obtained his ultimate ambition

¹²⁶HMC Salisbury Papers, XII, 548.

¹²⁷Salisbury, XII, 169.

¹²⁸Salisbury, XII, 185.

and became James I of England. Though the change over was smooth, thanks to the stage management of Cecil, it was natural that many people viewed with apprehension the advent of the new reign. Not the least of these was Lok, who exchanged a Queen who had ignored him for a King who actively disliked him. However, he bravely reengaged the fight to obtain some recognition from his new sovereign. A letter to Cecil in June 1603, which was obviously meant for James's eyes too, begins with a reference to his writing -- the only reference in all of his correspondence. He calls it his "wonted refuge" and suggests that a return to the literary life would be less troublesome to his patron, and best fitting to his estate. He then asks for an audience with the King so that he may convince him that his "former employments were honourable in their objects, as they proceeded from her Majesty of blessed memory ... and were faithfully discharged." Lok adds what he must have thought was a telling debating point when he suggests that deeds a Scottish King might "chance distaste" a King of England might "well regard if not reward." The plea here is to that politic principle of Louis d'Orleans which the English of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries long remembered; as David Lloyd put it, "Louis the Eleventh [recte Twelfth] of France would say, when he was advised to take Revenge of those that had affronted him before he came to the Crown that it became not the King of France to

revenge the Injuries done to the Duke of Orleans."¹²⁹ In a Biblical flourish designed perhaps to appeal to James's well-known pretension to being a prophet-King, Lok announces that "I was not the last or least that strawed the branches of palm in his princely way." Lok ends by reminding Cecil, "to you only I presume to recommend my first flight in this new world."¹³⁰ Unfortunately the eloquent plea did not have its desired effect. One presumes that James had a very different view of Lok's activities, both past and present, involving his Scottish subjects.

At this time once more Lok's immediate domestic troubles, especially those involving John Killigrew, took sudden precedence over any possible future problems. During the years Killigrew's case had been slowly making its way through the various legal processes so beloved of the age. Though in 1598 he appears to have been in prison for a short period, for most of the time Killigrew was at liberty fruitlessly seeking loans from members of his own family, and writing begging letters to Cecil. In one of these he asks to be allowed to follow his "old business" -- he does not specify which one -- in order to pay his debts, "especially to my true friend Mr. Henry Locke."¹³¹ One

¹²⁹Lloyd, p. 117.

¹³⁰HMC Salisbury Papers, XV, 141-42.

¹³¹HMC Salisbury Papers, XI, 151.

cannot help thinking that, with friends like John Killigrew, Lok did not need any enemies. During these years Killigrew seems to have managed to settle some outstanding debts, but at last a final accounting was demanded by his creditors. We do not know what happened to the other victims of his misdeeds; but Lok's estate, already impoverished, was ruined. His home, presumably the poor cottage at Acton, was sold from under him to pay John Killigrew's debts, and his family, "a weak wife ready to perish" and seven children, were forced to seek shelter amongst friends and neighbours. Almost at the same time in the west of England, his only sister, another Anne, and his brother-in-law, Robert Moyle, died within a few days of each other. They left six small children who, together with the Moyle estate, immediately became the property of the Court of Wards. Seizing the opportunity to recover a little of his own family's fortune from the greater misfortune of his orphaned nephews and nieces, Lok hastened to write to Cecil to suggest a certain Thomas Kennis as a suitable guardian to continue the children's "former entrance in religion, virtue, and learning." At the same time, while disclaiming any interest in Moyle's "plentiful estate", he does suggest that "if any grace may remain ... it may herein appear."¹³² His wish was granted and a small gratuity from Cecil's great

¹³² HMC Salisbury Papers, XVI, 100.

cornucopia enabled him to continue his hand-to-mouth existence.

It is now time to take a final look at two other members of the Lok family, Michael and his son Zacharias. Zacharias, whom we assume to have sat in Parliament in Cecil's interest for several years, is on record in 1602 writing to Cecil to ask for a patent. He mentions that the candidate whom Her Majesty favours is a Justice of the Peace but he thinks that the grant should be made to "a man of honesty and trust, for he never fingers any of Her Majesty's money."¹³³ It is symptomatic of the age that anyone seeking office should profess to be the only honest man in a sea of corruption. Zacharias Lok would die in 1603 bequeathing his seal, his plush-lined coat, and all of his books to his father.¹³⁴ Michael Lok, mainly as a result of the Frobisher debacle when he too had gone to prison for debts inadvertently acquired, had also experienced over the years the monetary and litigious problems which appear to be depressingly common in this branch of the Lok family. At the same time his own life included much travel to far-flung countries and he is said to have spent 500 pounds on books, maps, charts, and instruments.¹³⁵ His knowledge of

¹³³HMC Salisbury Papers, XII, 210.

¹³⁴DNB, XII, 93.

¹³⁵DNB, XII, 92.

geography was recognized by a contemporary, Richard Hakluyt, who dedicated his book, Divers voyages touching the discovery of America, to him in 1582. Later in life Michael Lok would use his own literary talents to spread awareness of the lands of the New World and his intense interest in colonizing English territories abroad. His name lives on in the fame of his grandson, John Locke the philosopher.

Henry Lok, meanwhile, had not ceased his petitions to Cecil. Throughout 1604 letters were sent off to his patron every two months or so. He reminds Cecil that he is the "only powerful witness of his endeavours now surviving." He says he is ashamed to write so often to the man whose "alms have fed his hopes and his body these latter months." He begs to know the King's "princely inclination" towards himself. He petitions the King again, to remind him of their reconciliation.¹³⁶ Lok's letters must have lain with many others, all seeking a change of state or new hope from a new King who had celebrated the start of his reign with a "rash bestowal of favours."¹³⁷ Cecil had been made a baron and was now Lord Cecil of Essendon; by 1604 he would also be Viscount Cranbourne. Others felt neglected: Sir Arthur Gorges, an old servant of the Queen, and a well-known poet and translator, tells Cecil that "in this new age he is

¹³⁶ HMC Salisbury Papers, XVI, 146, 147, 154, 448.

¹³⁷ Willson, p. 161.

cast behind all men in preferment."¹³⁸ Cecil, though he does not seem to have been able to move the King to help Lok, continued supplying him with "alms" while the latter made plans for the future of his family. By 1606 Lok had decided to send his eldest son either to France or to Flanders and asked for employment in the form of an errand to the ambassador to defray the costs of the journey. In May 1607 he asked for a pass to Leyden in the Netherlands (a centre of the cloth trade) so that he might send two of his sons there. He added that one of them, another Henry, "desires I recommend his service to you now at parting, who I trust shall one day discharge some part of the many duties I owe you."¹³⁹ It seems that Lok's sons, at the beginning of their careers at least, and with the exception of the young Henry, who appears to have shared his father's unquenchable thirst for a place amongst the powerful, chose to seek a livelihood at the solid base of the staple trade rather than among the ephemeral prospects of the Court. It is here that we also come more or less to the end of Lok's unfortunate involvement in the affairs of John Killigrew. It is most unlikely that he received restitution for either the debts owed him by Killigrew, or for the deprivation he and his family had undergone as the result of Killigrew's

¹³⁸ HMC Salisbury Papers, XVI, 435.

¹³⁹ HMC Salisbury Papers, XIX, 124.

own imprisonment. But he never ceased in his hope that the law would give him compensation and in 1606 he reminds Cecil to refer the case between himself and Killigrew to the Attorney General.¹⁴⁰ We hear no more of the sickly wife or of the remaining children, but then they had never intruded into his professional correspondence until extreme circumstances had forced him to use them as mute witnesses to his misfortunes. When the older boys were settled he started again to search for a place. In June 1607 he applied for the tobacco pipes monopoly but with little success.¹⁴¹

At the same time Lok was still engaged in his suit for the recovery of his land, but in November 1607 he writes to tell Cecil that he cannot continue because he has no money. So he begs for a pass, "and some small employment" to enable him to go to the Hague to visit his sons.¹⁴² However, three weeks later the money to pursue his suit has somehow turned up; he then changes his request to Cecil and, instead of a pass, asks for a "small benevolence." In the following February 1607-8 he renewed his former request to go to the Low Countries "as well to see and comfort my sons as to shun peril and conceal wants."¹⁴³ This Micawber-like

¹⁴⁰ HMC Salisbury Papers, XVIII, 418.

¹⁴¹ HMC Salisbury Papers, XIX, 148.

¹⁴² HMC Salisbury Papers, XIX, 342.

¹⁴³ HMC Salisbury Papers, XX, 71.

existence continued until about mid-1609 when Cecil decided to send Lok to Prague. In what proves to be his last surviving letter to his patron, Lok manages to convey once more the unswerving hope that had sustained him throughout the long years since his return from Scotland. He thanks Cecil for presenting yet another suit to the King, and for his posting to Prague. It has, he says, "so far raised my spirits that I yet hope that it would please God to work some good by me in this world, to his service and relief of me and my sons, whose surviving life may supply my defective power in discharging vowed duty to you."¹⁴⁴ We know that Lok eventually got to Prague because, in August 1609, Levinus Munck, Cecil's secretary, wrote to tell his master that he had given orders to pay Lok 100 crowns on his arrival there.¹⁴⁵ In November of that same year Munck ordered a bill of £31 13s 4d to be sent to Prague to pay "one whom his Lordship entertains there for the King's service."¹⁴⁶ It is pleasant to note that the last news of Lok is monetary, even though one knows that within three years the fountainhead of his fortune would be cut off with the death of Cecil. In 1609 he would be about fifty-six years of age, not young for those days but with some expectation of more time on earth.

¹⁴⁴SP Dom., Addenda 1580-1625, p. 521.

¹⁴⁵HMC Salisbury Papers, XXI, 120.

¹⁴⁶Salisbury XXI, 155.

One hopes that when Cecil died in 1612, some provision was made for keeping Lok on the payroll, but given the somewhat primitive form of the bureaucracy of the day one wonders if in the end, to quote Lord Burghley's words, he finally became "a hop without a pole." There is no more news, the name Lok disappears from the various state papers. Thus, just as we have no specific date for his birth, there is none for his death. A small item in the De Lisle and Dudley papers may have some relevance here. On the payroll of the Governor's Company in the Flushing garrison, next to that of another familiar surname, Ensign Ferdinando Carey, is one Anthonin Locke, Corporal, who received four Shillings.¹⁴⁷ Perhaps one of Lok's sons found the staple trade to be too boring after all.

In trying to assess Henry Lok's life and the real meaning of what appears to be, at least in the latter years, a somewhat parlous existence, the first point that must be stressed is that it was not in any way unique. There were tens of thousands of Loks in England at the time. True middle men of the new middle class they were caught somewhere in the centre of the new social hierarchy being created as they lived. Not in any way indigent or desperate enough to be covered by the rudimentary poor laws of the age, too much gentlemen to be able to descend once more to

¹⁴⁷HMC De Lisle and Dudley Papers, V, 31.

the craftsman level, not rich enough to move farther up the scale to flourishing entrepreneurship and or landed gentry status; they had to seek a position that would define both their place on the social scale and enable them to live in the manner expected of them. Miss Kelso lists the possibilities open to "a gentleman who lacked independent means" and they include divinity, trade, service in a nobleman's family, and "industry," i.e., achievement in some original way, in particular adventure on the high seas in emulation of men like Columbus, Magellan, and Frobisher.¹⁴⁸ Unfortunately, within this somewhat limited choice there was a great scramble for the best places while the penalty for failure was too often the loss of all of one's possessions.

At the same time, whereas place and a modest competency may have satisfied the new gentlemen of the recent past, the age of Elizabeth unleashed not only great enthusiasm and excitement, but the idea of rising expectations. Miss Sheavyn, in her discussion of the literary profession of the time, notes that as a result of growing wealth, "men began to attach to riches an importance vastly greater than before ... with a society tending more and more to measure men by financial standards."¹⁴⁹ John Killigrew was certainly speaking as a man of his time when he told Cecil that

¹⁴⁸ Kelso, pp. 67-8.

¹⁴⁹ Sheavyn, p. 2.

"a golden prey enticeth many a man."¹⁵⁰ What is more, in an age when display and conspicuous consumption were in reality vestigial habits left over from a feudal past, many in the rising middle class emulated the bad fiscal habits of their betters rather than the prudent management we associate with their more practised descendants. There is no doubt that in comparison with many Lok was well paid, but one imagines that he considered over-spending and debt natural elements in a gentleman's life. This being said, it must also be noted that the agential life was particularly unsuitable for the practice of sensible economic habits. An agent more often than not had to disburse current expenses from his own pocket and then claim them later. To guard against the widespread corruption of the time each item had to be scrutinized before payment was made and reimbursement was slow. In the meantime the agent had to borrow money and obtain goods on account to enable himself and his family to live. It did not take long under this system for current expenses to outweigh future payments. What is more, the cumbersome and penny-pinching method of paying agents had no real effect on stemming the activities of the truly dishonest who early learned how to cover their tracks. As for men higher on the social scale than Lok, their use of government office for personal gain was often justified by

¹⁵⁰ HMC Salisbury Papers, XII, 485.

the all-embracing term "lawful prize." In wartime especially, a man in an important position could recoup the losses of a lifetime of bad management and set himself and his family on a firm financial base for the future. Sir George Carew, Robert Cecil's special friend, during his time as treasurer of the war in Ireland, indulged in corruption on a grand scale. This man who, as Black says, was "the bearer of an honourable name, and whose loyalty to the state was above suspicion, made a fortune for himself ... by passing falsified clothing accounts, by manipulating exchange, and by purchasing provisions and paying troops in the base Irish currency, while he himself received sterling from England."¹⁵¹ Viewed from this perspective we see that Lok, even though he had less opportunity than Carew to manipulate funds, nevertheless was an extraordinarily honest man. During all his years of work for both Cecils, when he was often entrusted with payment of sums to other agents, there is only one record of a mistake, and this in the other agent's favour when it seems that Lok overpaid a certain Mowbray by ten pounds.¹⁵²

Then again the patronage system itself was the cause of the sort of disordered existence Lok was forced to lead.

¹⁵¹J. B. Black, The Oxford History of England: The Reign of Elizabeth (1936; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 259.

¹⁵²SP Dom., 1509-1603, p. 809. **

In it we see the remains of an older tradition of the rich being bound by Christian charity to help the less well off; in this sense Cecil's patronage of Lok was linked to the medieval practice of great property owners dispensing hospitality to their retainers. On the other hand we can also glimpse in Elizabethan personal patronage to state servants the prefigurement of today's official bureaucracy. The idea that servants of the Crown could no longer afford to disburse all expenses from their own pockets was recognized, but as yet the political and social actions necessary to solve this problem had not surfaced. In the meantime the various prerogatives of the Crown were used as money-making devices, and as "rewards" rather than salaries to state officials. This attitude filtered on down the scale so that what would in the future become an ordered and solvent civil service started life as a kind of great gratuity mart with each person getting the tip the one above him thought he deserved. A typical example of the nonchalant way the system worked is provided by Cecil himself. In one of his letters to his father he mentions that he has heard from Colville "whom," he adds, "I have lately neglected."¹⁵³ The casual phrase hides a reality that both Lok and Colville were only too familiar with. While Cecil was preoccupied with state affairs and too busy to send the expected sum,

¹⁵³ SP Dom., 1598-1601, p. 25.

his subordinates would be writing begging letters and scrabbling around as best they could for a subsistence. The result, to paraphrase James's sonnet once more, was constant inconstancy in their everyday life which in itself bred a somewhat reckless attitude in monetary matters.

Finally we must ask ourselves if Lok's life was as desperate as it appears to us to have been, or indeed if he himself viewed it in this light. The answer must be a somewhat equivocal no. And the first culprit in our misunderstanding of Lok's true estate is language itself. During the Queen's reign the vernacular came into its own; it was used in Court and Parliament; great European classics were rendered into idiomatic language and became English classics in their own right; there was constant discussion of ways to enrich the tongue which may have led at times to inkhornisms and awkward anglicizations, but which also gave English an added breadth and utility; by the end of the reign, and with certain reservations in scholarly circles, English was regarded by most people as equal to the other great languages of Europe. F. O. Matthiessen's words sum up concisely the atmosphere of the time: "The language was more fully alive than it had ever been, which means that the people were also."¹⁵⁴ This enthusiasm for the living vernacular sometimes resulted in a certain exuberance in

¹⁵⁴F. O. Matthiessen, Translation An Elizabethan Art (1931; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1965), p. 232.

its use. When confined to facts it worked well and in prose and poetry it flourished; it was when its every-day use was linked to emotion that pitfalls for the modern reader were laid. If we accepted as the literal truth all the promises in all the begging and complaining letters sent to the powerful during the reign of Elizabeth we would receive a very distorted picture of the reality behind the language. For instance, hyperbole seems to have been regarded as a useful tool in a conventional complaint. The exaggerated language and embroidery on the literal truth, by its very contrast to the stilted phrases of more mundane correspondence, was designed to jolt a patron into some action, no matter how little. One of the reasons for my (perhaps unfair) distrust of John Colville's agential reports is their lack of decorum; they are too much like complaint letters in style. In Lok's case we know things were never as bad as he depicted them. One week he is desolate because he has no funds to pursue his law suits, the next he is squandering capital he has managed to scrounge from somewhere on pursuing justice in the Courts. Conyers Read is talking of Walsingham when he makes the following comment, but it could as well apply to Henry Lok:

There was in him, as in so many others at the court of Queen Elizabeth, a decided taste for speculation which preferred to take long chances for exorbitant profits.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵Read, III, 391.

The sickly wife -- possibly the victim of repeated child-bearing and the inadequate diet of the period, rather than of any real deprivation -- and the children survive; the older boys are outfitted and sent on their way into the world even as Lok's complaint letters delineate abject poverty and lost hopes. Things just could not have been as black as Lok painted them. The most one can admit is that insecurity was as much a feature of his life as it was for many other people at the time. Then too Lok was fortunate to have a permanent patron. He may have been unlucky in his search for a competence to retire on, but Cecil never let him down. Their relationship can be seen as a Renaissance ideal: the good and generous master and the faithful and honest servant. This in itself assured Lok for most of his life a recognized place in society and the real respect of his peers. We note how often he is referred to with affection, and how always the appellation Mr. is placed before his name. He is H. L. Gentleman, or, as Westcott notes, together with Constable and Churchyard the only poet distinguished by the title Esq. by Bodenham in Belvedere.¹⁵⁶ It was an age when, as Miss Kelso tells us:

... the line between the gentle and the ungentle was vague. There was a group that bore the name of gentlemen by unmistakable right, there was another group that just as unmistakably had no title.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶Westcott, p. xlii, n. 2.

¹⁵⁷Kelso, p. 37.

Henry Lok may have failed but he never lost caste, and this must have been important to him. We shall also discover that he was sure he had a firm foothold in the next world as a result of his religious beliefs, and his poetry, which parleyed God's order within the order of the sonnet form provided comfort and stability amidst his somewhat chaotic existence. On the whole, then, Lok's life was not quite such a desperate scramble to him as it appears to be to us.

This being said we must add that there is no doubt that he did not fulfil his ambition to retire full of honours and on a state pension. But here, besides the often mentioned bad luck, one must place the primary blame on the nature of his employment. Though the secret-service system of the time was rudimentary by comparison to today's top-heavy bureaucratic organizations, the main elements that would distinguish espionage structures in the future were already discernible. Amongst these we note proliferation, secrecy, and human expendability. More and more ministers of the time tended to have their league of personal agents. Besides Burghley and Cecil, Walsingham, Leicester, Essex, Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Admiral Howard, and the earl of Shrewsbury, all had some kind of agential service, and each jealously guarded the information he obtained until he could make political gain from it. Robert Cecil describes in blunt terms the place and the worth of an agent when he tells a correspondent, "... I use Locke but in particular

trusts, of which I make to divers men particular distribution, as I find each person proper and capable."¹⁵⁸ It was Lok's misfortune to be used by the Queen and Cecil to advance immediate political interests in Scotland. When the plotting was discovered Lok was again used by both the Queen and the King as a scapegoat, and he spent the rest of his life paying for their temporary discomfiture. In this sense the story of Lok's life leaves a bitter after-taste that is very modern indeed. Perhaps he is also representative of all those spies who never did manage to come in from the cold.

¹⁵⁸ HMC Salisbury Papers, XIV, 186.

PART III: THE WORKS

Introduction

Assist me, some extemporal god of rhyme, for I am
sure I shall turn sonneteer. Devise, wit; write,
pen; for I am for whole volumes in folio.

'Love's Labour's Lost I, ii

As far as is known Henry Lok's first poem appeared in print during his stay in Scotland in 1591 when he was one of three poets who were permitted to append salutatory sonnets to the collection of poems by James VI, Exercises at Vacant Houres.¹ However it is quite probable that Lok had been a member of an artistic coterie in Elizabeth's Court too, and almost certain that he had written his own share of the verses that gentlemen poets passed round to be read and then perhaps copied into commonplace books. Indeed, as we shall see, the style and tone of Lok's published works are eloquent testimony to his avid study and enthusiastic practice of the poetic fashions of his time. The very fact that he chose the sonnet as the exclusive measure of his verse is in itself significant. As Maurice Evans remarks, it was "essentially the verse form of the gentleman amateur."²

¹The other two were Henry Constable and M. W. Fowler.

²M. Evans, English Poetry in the Sixteenth Century (London: Hutchison's University Library, 1955), p. 95.

This being said, the greatest problem then facing anyone desirous of discussing Lok's poetry is that it is not really of very good quality. During his own time he seems to have achieved some recognition from a public anxious above all to read moral and uplifting works as opposed to what they saw as the profane and wordly poetry with which fashion was flooding the market. Today, however, Lok's works are almost unknown to the general public while by the cognoscenti of Renaissance poetry and poetics he is seen as a minor figure on the periphery of the sixteenth-century horizon. What is more, when most of these experts discuss his work, their main aim appears to be to show just how lacking in polish it really is. Miss Campbell is perhaps the kindest in that she addresses the reader's attention to their content rather than their style, and she does give Lok credit for writing the longest sonnet sequence of them all.³ Unfortunately, as with so many of the minor secular sonnet sequences, length does not always imply excellence. One has only to read the tortured versifying and the strained imagery of Griffin's Fidessa (sixty-two sonnets), or Smith's Chloris (forty-nine sonnets) to realize to what extent the delicate balance between talent and the sonnet form was responsible for the equilibrium of perfection found in the masterpieces of this

³L. B. Campbell, Divine Poetry and Drama in Sixteenth Century England (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), pp. 131-133.

genre. Holland, in his discussion of British psalmists, informed the eighteenth-century reader of the religious rather than the artistic purpose of these rhymsters, saying of their works, that "a deep and serious earnestness was more conspicuous than either exactness or smoothness of expression."⁴ But even he, when at last he reached Henry Lok and reproduced his version of Psalm XXVII, commented "... it must be admitted to be a most feeble rendering of one of the finest, most pathetic, and evangelical of the Psalms."⁵ Miss Scott is, if anything, even more scathing in French. Of Lok's verses she says:

En général ces poèmes sont prosaïques et monotones.
Parfois une belle phrase tirée directement de la
Bible vient réveiller le lecteur somnolent.⁶

If she gives praise she does so niggardly: "Les vers sont péniblement corrects. Lok possédait une certaine facilité comme versificateur."⁷ Of his Dedicatory Sonnets she says, "Tous ces sonnets ne possèdent qu'un médiocre intérêt pour la postérité."⁸ It is here at least that I hope to prove

⁴J. Holland, The Psalmists of Britain (London: R. Groombridge, MDCCXLIII), I, 139.

⁵Holland, p. 229.

⁶J. G. Scott, Les Sonnets Elisabethains (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1929), p. 222.

⁷Scott, p. 223.

⁸Scott, p. 216.

Miss Scott wrong. There is in these poems information of interest to the literary biographer and, one hopes, to the reader. Finally, in this review of comments on Lok's poetry, even James Scanlon, who devotes a thesis to the examination of two hundred of Lok's sonnets of Sundry Christian Passions, prefaces his remarks on the subject of the importance of Lok's verse to the student of Renaissance poetics with the words, "This importance derives not so much from its literary brilliance as from its value for the literary historian."⁹ He enlarges on this theme to cover Lok's foreshadowing of the metaphysical poets and his epitomizing of certain poetic trends of the late sixteenth century. But much as one might want to allow Lok any claim to importance that has been made for him, it is really not true that he was a trail blazer. He merely shared with many other poetasters of the time a certain ability to learn rote-fashion the latest rhetorical devices and "colours" and then to incorporate them into verse of uncertain quality. Yet there is something endearing about the ant-like industry with which he set about his self-appointed task as courtly poet and divine singer. There is also a link with his Calvinist childhood. For in Lok the divine poet we may discern the successor to Lok the busy

⁹J. J. Scanlon, "Henry Lok's Sundry Christian Passions: A Critical Edition" (Doctoral dissertation, Brown University, 1970), p. ix.

child punctiliously transcribing and dilating the Sabbath sermon.

Fortunately the literary biographer is not bound to follow strictly the rules of stylistic criticism. Instead it is possible to view the works of the subject as an extension of his experience, to discuss their content not so much in terms of excellence as in search of clues to a deeper understanding of the character of the writer. In Lok's case, besides being the more prudent course (a stanza-by-stanza exploration of his verse would prove to be more stultifying than enlightening), it is the more interesting. For this enthusiastic if limited Renaissance man made his dreams of being both a courtly gentleman and a Christian pilgrim come true in his poetry. Before he rounded off his little life he knew the success of being not only a recognized poet, but perhaps more important in that age (so much like our own) when artifice and reality fused to make the man, his reputation, in his literary life at least, was seen to be what it aspired to be. Lok's poetic "image" was clear-cut and permanent even if the face behind the mask was at times distorted by the cares and failures of his daily toil.

Thus I intend to discuss Lok's poetry as an extension of his life in both its courtly and its religious manifestations. For example, in looking at the sixty Dedicatory sonnets, the only secular poetry to survive, we

will view Lok less as the writer seeking monetary reward in a declining market (we know he had a regular if fluctuating income from the Cecils), than as Lok the gentleman-poet fulfilling his role, and at the same time confirming his place in his own small niche in the hierarchical structure of the Court. Baldwin tells us that there is no single word more characteristic of Renaissance literature than courtier. He continues, "In its wider sense it describes not only Ariosto and Tasso, but also Ronsard and Spenser."¹⁰ And we might add, in his own eyes at least, Henry Lok.

In the voluminous and varied religious poetry, which ranges from metrical versions of the Psalms and poetic dilations of the Bible to more than three hundred sonnets detailing his spiritual experiences, Lok extends and refines the other strong strand in his character: the desire to know himself and his relationship with God. These works provide us with an example of what Martz calls "the fierce inward scrutiny of Puritanism."¹¹ We also see, particularly in his religious sonnets, not only the fulfilment of the severe spiritual purpose instilled in him in childhood by his mother, but as well a picture of Henry Lok the Christian traveller struggling through this vale of

¹⁰C. S. Baldwin, Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 12.

¹¹L. L. Martz, The Poetry of Meditation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 121..

tears confident in the mercy and beneficence of his ultimate and only true patron, God.

I have divided the discussion of Lok's works into two main sections. The first examines his Dedicatory sonnets which were collected by the printer and appended to the 1597 edition of his verge version of Ecclesiastes; the second discusses his sonnet sequence Sundry Christian Passions and the hundred-odd Sundry Affectionate Sonets of a feeling Conscience. I have chosen to discuss the Dedicatory sonnets first because, in terms of both autobiographical material and general tone, they are sequentially a logical continuation of Lok's courtly life and help us fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge of the man and his relation with his contemporaries. The religious poetry, on the other hand, is representative of Lok's inner life, a spiritual existence that proved impregnable against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. It was his faith that enabled him to survive and find more meaning and comfort in his life on earth than the bare details of its telling seem to warrant. Also, if we end with the religious poetry it is possible to view that last journey to Prague from Henry Lok's spiritual vantage point. It was not only another wearying trip for an aging man long past taking any pleasure in his agential duties, but also a milestone on that other and more important journey that Lok believed he had begun the day he was born. Indeed, as his own opinions of his

earthly pilgrimage best express the spiritual confidence with which he trudged his way to the Promised Land, I have chosen to end this introduction to his works with Sonnet LXXX from the second part of Sundry Christian Passions:

Amidst this pilgrimage where wandering I,
Do trace the steps which flesh and bloud doth tread,
My comfort is, that aye mine eyes are led,
By gracious object which in faith I spy;
Whose brightnesse guides my steps, which else awry.
Were like to slide, through satans subtil slight,
Gainst whom his holy Angels alwaies fight,
And suffer not my strength too farre to try:
By day his word and works are in my sight,
Like to a cloud to comfort me in dread;
By fire through deserts, and the sea so red,
His hand doth governe me in dangerous night,
His favour bright, Conducting this my way,
An host of stops shall not my journey stay.

Politic Poetics

When I had these Psalms finished
And into metre brought
To whom I myght, them dedicate
I strayght then me bethought.

Francis Seagar, Certayne Psalms (1553),
opening stanza of a rhyming epistle to
Lord Russell.¹²

Before we discuss Henry Lok's Dedicatory sonnets it is necessary to refer briefly to the work to which they were appended. Ecclesiastes, Otherwise called the Preacher, Containing Solomons Sermons or Commentaries (as it may probably be collected) upon the 49 Psalms of David his father; compendiously abridged, and also paraphrastically dilated

¹²Quoted in Holland, I, 166.

in English poesie, according to the analogie of Scripture,
and consent, of the most approved writer thereof is as long
and as convoluted as its title suggests. In its painstaking
effort to make plain the word of God it is linked with what
Holland, while giving credit to Catholic efforts in the
field, calls "a leading feature of Protestantism, the render-
ing [of] the expressions of devotion in a language which the
people could understand."¹³ It is also associated with a
trend that R. F. Jones calls a characteristic of the six-
teenth century: "... the unceasing if not universal desire
to educate the people, high and low, who did not possess the
linguistic keys to learning."¹⁴ Mathiessen, in his enthu-
siastic and stimulating study of some of the important
translations of the time, has given us this picture of lan-
guage and literature as rendered into the vernacular by the
Renaissance translator:

Popular in the best sense, it took advantage of all
the new richness of language. His diction was racy
and vivid The structure of his sentence reveals
the growing tendencies of the time -- the passionate
delight in fullness of expression, the free use of
doublets and alliteration, the building up of
parallel constructions for the sake of rhythm.¹⁵

¹³Holland, p. 44.

¹⁴R. F. Jones, The Triumph of the English Language
(Stanford University Press, 1953), p. 34.

¹⁵F. O. Mathiessen, Translation an Elizabethan Art,
p. 4.

Most of these new virtues are present, as we shall see, in Lok's poetry. Unfortunately the resulting works are too often neither as vivid nor as exciting as others written by Lok's more talented contemporaries. And Ecclesiastes itself, undoubtedly a zealous attempt at Biblical exegesis on Lok's part, is really quite dreadful. I intend to include only a very short excerpt from it without further comment, placing it, as Lok did, with his Dedicatory sonnets. Here is Lok's abridgement of the well-known verses in Chapter III which in the Geneva Bible begin, "To all things there is an appointed time and a time to every purpose under heaven." First comes the abridgement:

All purposes have proper times all things fit season
find
A time of birth, and death, to plant, and supplant
is assigned.

From the dilation, which runs to four stanzas of seven lines each, I will quote the third only:

-Begin we first where we begin and end,
With birth of man in mother's wombe conceived,
Which (fortie weekes expir'd) needs forth must send,
And age compels to yeeld the breath receiud,
In both of which, the wisest are deceiu'd;
In birth and death of diverse diuersly [sic],
Preventing time, of birth and time to dy.

And so, conscientiously and copiously, Lok works his way through his rendition of the wisdom of Solomon.

In a preliminary epistle "To the Christian Reader," Lok compares the happy lot of the English under Elizabeth to that of the ancient Jews during the rule of Solomon.

This graceful tribute out of the way, he then sternly sets forth the aim of his work which he sees as a "mithridate" for the "sickness of all ages," the "slackness in the constant trauell in religion and vertue" which is the result of worldly success. Within the Epistle Dedicatory to Elizabeth a short excuse for the unworthiness of the finished work, though of course obligatory, rings all the more true when we compare his words to what we know of the actual facts of his life in the early 1590s. He says:

... so whilst common cares and domestick duties -- the direct enemies of all ingenous [sic] actions, and proper poyson of pure inuention -- did many times confound my iudgement, disturb my leisure, and in a manner vtterly disable my disposition for so waightly an affaire, -- remouing so often my hand from my mind, and my mind almost from the affection of my heart -- I -- with half my weak self -- haue bene driuen thus to peece together this often broken off, and now vnworkmanly perfected taske.

And now to turn to the Dedicatory sonnets themselves.¹⁶ They can be divided roughly into three groups. There are those sent to people of importance and influence in the ecclesiastical, political, and artistic world of 1597, among these John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, the two Cecils and Lady Cecil (who died while the book was at the printer's), various other members of the Privy Council, and such types of courtier and poet as the earls of Essex and Southampton, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Fulke

¹⁶For a complete list of recipients, see Appendix.

Greville. I would also include in this first group two famous women. The first, Mary Sidney, who, because of her connection with a family noted for its generous and discerning patronage, as well as for her individual fame in the literary world, was seen as symbolic of the cultured Elizabethan woman. The second, Penelope Rich, who, less for what she was than for the persona Sir Philip Sidney had created for her in Astrophil and Stella, can be seen as an image of the ideal woman, the inspiration of every poet. The poems in this first group are noteworthy for their exalted style and high poetic diction. The second group of Dedicatory sonnets is also addressed to people of importance in Lok's world, but they appear to be people he may have known as friends, or at least as more than mere acquaintances. In this group we include Lord Willoughby, who as Peregrine Bertie was born during his parents' sojourn on the continent during their Marian exile. Then there is Sir Henry Killigrew, another Marian exile, and the uncle of the notorious John Killigrew. A friend from the West Country, Richard Carew, the antiquary, is also the recipient of a more personal sonnet. Two representative women in this group are the Countess of Warwick and Lady Hoby, née Margaret Carey. It was to the former that Lok's mother Anne had dedicated in 1590 her final piece of work, a translation of Jean Taffin's Of the markes of the children of God and their comfort in afflictions, obviously as

a tribute from one godly lady to another.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Countess of Warwick was not only a Protestant of high repute, but she had strong influence with the Queen and we remember that she would add her voice to the many asking for a place for Henry Lok. Lady Hoby, a member of the Carey family with whom Lok had particularly close ties, both personal and professional, must have been well known to Lok. She was also the sister-in-law of the other Margaret, Lady Hoby the Puritan whose diary has been used to illuminate certain aspects of this story, and like her a relation by marriage of Lord Burghley.¹⁸ His sonnet to her, like all sonnets in this group, implies some years of acquaintanceship and some knowledge by the recipient of the character and works of Henry Lok. Finally, the third group consists of two sonnets, one to Lok's brother-in-law Robert Moyle and his wife, the other to Mrs. Eleanor Bowes, the wife of Robert Bowes, ambassador to Scotland during Lok's time there.¹⁹ In both these last sonnets the tone and

¹⁷P. Collinson, "The Role of Women in the English Reformation illustrated by the Life and Friendships of Anne Locke" (Studies in Church History II, ed. G. Cuming, 1965), p. 272.

¹⁸Each was married to a son of Lady Elizabeth Russell (nee Cooke), relict of Sir Thomas Hoby and sister-in-law to Burghley.

¹⁹All identifications are taken from F. B. Williams, Jr., Index of Dedications and Commendatory Verses (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1962), though he gets the Carey Lady Hoby's Christian name wrong.

imagery are very intimate and homely and suggest friendly intercourse.

From the above brief summary of the types of sonnets addressed to three differing groups of people it can be seen that, in an age when decorum ranked high on both the courtly and poetic scale of value, Henry Lok meticulously observed this particular branch of etiquette. Miss Thomson, in her discussion of dedicatory poetry, emphasizes the growing need at that time for the writer of such verse to tailor his content to the discrimination of the recipients. She says:

Men like Sidney, the Earls of Southampton and Pembroke, women like the Countesses of Pembroke and Bedford demanded more from poets than flattery Poets strove more to cater for the tastes of the individual patrons A kind of specialization can be observed.²⁰

At the same time, Lok's Dedicatory sonnets are not of the usual type, the rather desperate multiple dedication suggested by Miss Sheavyn when she says, "It is a sure sign of the lack of effective patronage, when an author dedicates his works to a great variety of patrons."²¹ Lok, with perfect confidence, could have limited his dedication of Ecclesiastes to the Queen and his direct patrons, the Cecils. Nor are these sonnets indicative of the sort of Grub street

²⁰P. Thomson, "The Literature of Patronage," Essays in Criticism II (1952), pp. 274-75.

²¹P. Sheavyn, The Literary Profession in the Elizabethan Age, p. 23.

mentality described by E. H. Miller in his discussion of multiple and often unauthorized dedications when writers, in an attempt to gain some kind of economic leverage, produced what he calls "debasing flattery and exploitation of new patrons."²² On the contrary, in an age of hyperbole Lok's praise is usually respectfully correct, and within the bounds of propriety. For example, in the first group of sonnets, those to people of importance and influence, he does not, as is usual in the more frankly mercenary dedications, make a point of stressing the charitable tendencies of the recipient but rather dwells on his spiritual and moral virtues in general. Furthermore, in writing multiple dedications Lok was following a fashion of his times in which even such poets as Spenser indulged -- and we may imagine that it was to his example that Lok looked when he embarked on his own multiple efforts rather than to the more reprehensible one of the professional hacks.

Let us now look at some examples of Lok's eulogizing method in the group of sonnets addressed to people of influence above him in the social structure. To the Archbishop of Canterbury, the subject of whose sonnet is, most appropriately, the contemporary concern about the amount of immoral literature many people thought was being printed to the detriment of public morality, Lok writes of the

²²E. H. Miller, The Professional Writer in Elizabethan England (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 110.

"swarme" of books "most base" which are invading the world" while "better matters buried long do ly." His final couplet makes the point that Whitgift, by receiving Lok's religious work, will also be fulfilling part of his holy mandate:

Yes sure, world knowes, you can and will protect
The cause, why God and prince did you erect.

In Lord Burghley's sonnet he makes reference to the Sibylline books and links them to his own "precious present" of Ecclesiastes, "Which God on king, king did on world bestow." This latter phrase is then neatly "turned" to flatter Cecil and define his worth to his country:

Our Sibill you, our Salomon we know
And so your words and workes the world doth prise:
To vertue you, your selfe a father show;
Hence honor yours, hence countrie's good doth rise.

Lok's is one of the happier adaptations of the title by which the old Lord Treasurer had long been known: he was, as his latest biographer has put it, "pater patriae and the young men knew that they would not see his like again."²³

The opening quatrain in the sonnet to Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, defines the difference between flattery and honest praise:

What fame reports (by mouth of good and wise)
It is not flattery to record the same.
The publike eccho of your prayse doth rise,
That you by iustice ballance iudgement frame.

²³B. W. Beckingsale, Burghley, Tudor Statesman, 1520-1598 (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 198.

The others in this group are much the same: a modest amount of carefully constructed flattery, and then the offering of his gift of words. However, there is one sonnet which, besides repeating once more this common conceit of the lowly poet offering his works to be read, also contains a running double entendre in that those who knew of Lok's monetary troubles might construe the meaning as being more relevant to his economic situation than to the "want" of talent in his verse. It is addressed to Lord North who had just become Treasurer of the Household, and perhaps when faced with the person of this powerful steward Lok was unable to exercise his usual discreet control. The opening quatrain states:

I may not say, I shun to shew my want
Before your selfe, whom I true noble hold,
Since I, to others haue not made them scant,
And may of meaner men be well controlld.

He then craves North's "favour," suggesting in the third quatrain that

If with the best they haue a pardon wonne,
They may the boldlier passe the common view:
What princes like, the people hold well done,
And fame in passage doth her force renew.

There is more than a hint of irony in the second last line and, less disguised by protective colouring, it might even seem to refer to Lok's treatment by his own powerful prince.

Of course Lok did not write any of these dedications in a vacuum merely to satisfy a private inclination to praise a public person. Such an effort would have been not

only incomprehensible to most of his readers, but subject to immediate suspicion. On the other hand everyone understood the need of flattering people in high places. Yet once more it must be stressed that Lok, in comparison to other poets of his time, is relatively abstemious in his praise. Within this first group of sonnets we have repeated examples of his careful tailoring of poetic embellishments to the recipient's class and accomplishments, and nowhere is his judicious choice of conventional flattery better exemplified than in his use of allusion and imagery. Because Ecclesiastes is popularly supposed to have been written by Solomon his name or references to wisdom are often present in these sonnets, while religious imagery is preferred to all other when it is relevant. Men of high rank and heavy responsibility are more likely to be linked directly to the Biblical kingly administrator. Sir Thomas Egerton, Sir William Knollys, Sir John Stanhope, Lord Howard, and of course Lord Burghley are either clothed in Solomon's robes or likened to his wisest advisers. However, as he turns from the conscientious career diplomats to the more brilliant stars of Elizabeth's Court, Lok moves into classical imagery. Essex is the peer of Neptune, Triton, Mars and Perseus. Raleigh is endowed with the bravery of Mars and the wisdom of Pallas. One wonders if there is any significance in Lok's use of Pallas to describe Raleigh (a Cecil allusion), and its omission in the case of Essex who at the time was also a

colleague of the "wise men" in the Privy Council. We do not know; but it was no secret that the Cecils regarded Essex's desire for continued war with Spain as unworthy of a statesman, and before he died in 1598 Burghley dared draw to the attention of the young belligerent in full Council the concluding words of Psalm 55, "Men of blood shall not live out half their days."²⁴ We assume that Lok chose his praises carefully, emphasizing the attributes he thought most noteworthy in each of his dedicatees. The result, however, tends to play havoc with anything but the most loose classification of these particular sonnets. For instance, one would expect military heroes to have their martial prowess stressed, yet though both Sir John Norris, Lord General of Elizabeth's forces in Ireland, and Sir Francis Vere, the hero of Sluys, are eulogized, in neither case does Lok make more than a passing reference to their military background. In Sir John's sonnet Lok does link him to classical imagery by referring to his Spanish enemies as "moderne Marses," but his current political policies in Ireland take precedence over past battles. Sir Francis Vere, the Protestant knight who fought the Spaniards to a standstill in the Netherlands, is praised rather for his "wisdom," "virtue" and "honor," with wisdom stressed by being mentioned twice.

²⁴ Beckingsale, p. 187. The more familiar King James version says, "bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days."

Perhaps Lok, a longtime acquaintance of the "young Vere" involved in the escapade with the horse some twenty years before, preferred to emphasize the wisdom of the man over the rashness of youth. Thus any search for subtle political nuances in these sonnets is doomed to failure. Lok not only stuck to the most general and accepted contemporary view of the important personages he chose to write about but, because of the element of "occasional verse" so often found in dedicatory sonnets, he seems to have preferred to stress the most recent accomplishments of his more important subjects. All that we can be sure of is that he reserved classical imagery for the recognized luminaries of the Elizabethan Court and society. Therefore his apostrophes to the two distaff members of this group are couched in the latter mode. To Mary Sidney he writes:

Of all the nymphes of fruitfull Britaine's race,
Of all the troopes in our Dianaes traine,
You seeme not least, the Muses trophes grace,
In whom true honour spotlesse doth remaine.

He continues with an extended compliment to Sir Philip Sidney, "that pregnancie of spright," and "extinguisht Lampe of heauenly light," and ends with a fine rhetorical resolution that suggests both brother and sister are stars, he heaven's, she "earth's comfort." Lok, by linking Sir Philip Sidney to his sister in a shared encomium, was following current fashion: Spenser's own dedicatory sonnet to Mary Sidney is in reality a tribute to her brother

and much less balanced than Lok's. From Spenser's first line which states, "Remembraunce of that most Heroicke spirit," to the tenth which suggests that Sidney's image lives "In diuine resemblaunce of your face," it is Sidney who is remembered. Only the last four lines celebrate Mary Sidney's own virtues. As Miss Thomson notes, "... the surviving members of Sidney's family were not allowed to forget their kinship to one who had been, according to Fulke Greville, 'a very Maecenas of learning'" She adds, "Dead, Sidney was as potent a force as he had been in life."²⁵

The second lady to be honoured by Lok in this group is Penelope Devereux, Lady Rich, and here our busy sonneteer reaches for his platonic pen, beginning:

The perfect beautie, which doth most reclaime,
The purest thoughts from base and vaine desire,
Not seene, nor leuied is by common aime,
Of eies, whom coullers vse to set on fire:

and ending:

But (with Religion grast) adord of men;
These gifts of nature, since they meet with grace,
In you haue powre more than faire Venus face.

With the move to the second group of Dedicatory sonnets, those to people whom Lok appears to have known socially, we leave behind recognizably extravagant praise, classical imagery, and somewhat strained efforts to "turn" the offering of Solomon's works into a suitable compliment

²⁵Thomson, pp. 278-79.

to the recipient. Instead the tone, though always correct and tailored to the rank of the personage addressed, is easy and less stilted. Often a long period of acquaintanceship or even close friendship is implied; and the biographical snippets seem less artificially placed than in the first group of sonnets. The subject matter emphasizes his poetry and how he feels about it, and the sonnet is presented as a token of remembrance. In this context both Doctor Grosart and Miss Campbell suggest that Lok may well have inscribed the relevant sonnet in the presentation copies of Ecclesiastes that he gave to each dedicatee.²⁶ This seems to be very likely, especially as Grosart notes that the copy of Lok's poetry in the Bridgewater library has the sonnet of Lady Wooley prefixed to it in the author's own handwriting. Lady Wooley herself, a member of the west country Egerton family, appears to have been an acquaintance of long standing and there is a hint in the final couplet that a dead kinsman of hers had helped Lok in the past:

Then this accept, as I the same intend,
Which dutie to the dead would will me send.

The sonnet to Lady Southwell, a Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen, also discusses a relationship of several years. Again the final couplet is a summation of that

²⁶See A. B. Grosart, Miscellanies of The Fuller Worthies' Library (1871; rpt. New York: Ams Press Inc., 1970), I, 334, and Campbell, p. 33.

acquaintanceship as Lok offers his poem with the words:

And hope you will for auncient service sake,
Excuse my wants, and this in worth will take.

Several of the sonnets in this second group suggest that Lok has recently turned from secular to religious verse. To Lady Hunsdon, a kinswoman of Spenser and a notable bluestocking with a deep interest in literary works, Lok uses the medical imagery of the day as he explains:

Thinke you not strange, these passions new to see,
Which to my wonted humors different seeme,
They both are frute of one and selfe same tree,
The first for younger hold, this elder seeme.

Another example of this type of discussion occurs in the sonnet to Lady Hoby. Lok comments on his "change of style," presumably a reference to the religious nature of the work, and then explains why he has chosen a spiritual theme:

When scorne of hap, did force my hope to shift,
The place wherein felicitie I sought,
As tyr'd on Earth, to heauen my thoughts I lift,
Which in me this strange Metamorphos wrought.

These are sentiments tailored to the recipient's taste for Lady Margaret, married to the scholarly Sir Edward Hoby, whose own pen would in the future be used as a weapon with which to scourge the Papists, surely shared her husband's religious views and would approve of Lok's spiritual fortitude in the face of misfortune.²⁷

²⁷ Besides works and translations on the subject of politics, Sir Edward Hoby, in a long-standing literary argument with recusant propagandists, wrote a series of pamphlets and counter-accusations putting forth the Protestant point of view. See DNB, IX.

One of the more interesting autobiographical excerpts from this group gives us a glimpse of Henry Lok the poet talking with another writer. The sonnet is addressed to "his especial friend Richard Carew of Anthony, Esquire," who, besides being sheriff of Cornwall and a Member of Parliament, was himself acquiring for his translation of Tasso that fame that his Survey of Cornwall has secured. The sonnet takes the subject of writing poetry away from mere change of style and moves into an exposition of the poetic craft itself. Lok discusses his own poetry and compares his love for it to the love parents have for their children, "Which makes them prise the sometimes ouer deare."

He continues:

So it is like (with this my worke to fare)
With many readers, when they are alone,
Who senslesse of my trauell like a stone,
(As neuer hauing yet so tride their braine)
Will think I cocker this my brood, as one
Growne proud, that I some issue do attaine:
But you whose painfull pen hath shown you skill,
Can iudge my part, and it well conster will.

One hopes Carew's judgment was not too harsh.

A graceful remembrance of services received is contained in the sonnet to Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, which also seems to be recalling a long-standing association:

Forgetting you, I might myselfe acquight:
But parentes fauers, once my youths delight,
Your selfe a patterne of a happie peere,
Whose proofes of vertue publike are to sight,
Might me vpbraid with peeuish silence here,
If I should hold so meane a gift too deare,
For one, (whose ancient) debter yet I rest.

Another person who receives thanks for past favours is Sir Henry Killigrew, a man who no doubt tried to compensate somewhat for the ravages made by his unruly nephew on Lok's life. Or so it seems in the opening quatrain:

The native dutie which of right I owe,
To you good knight (for many fauours past,
To me and mine) do will me now bestow
Some token of my thankfull mind at last.

Then comes what in today's television parlance might be called a "sermonette" as Lok presents his "volume small":

Which from repentant heart of king did flow,
And many a warning too vnto vs all,
Who daily into new temptation fall,
And daily need assistance gainst the same,
In such respect this worke you well may call,
An antidote a happie life to frame.

Such high moral purpose was guaranteed to please a gentleman of Killigrew's Puritan stamp.

The final group of sonnets, the two with homely sentiments, again provide examples of Lok's skill in matching the matter to the man, or, in this case, the woman. To Eleanor Bowes he sends the sort of praise that, because it was offered in the spirit of Christian charity, ladies of precisian inclination were able to accept without being accused of undue pride. First he gives words of comfort when he suggests that the company of the faithful provides strength when "flesh and bloud doth shake Through feare of sin, and guiltie thoughts to quake." Then the final lines administer the spiritual compliment:

Whereof by you, since I experience make,
Whose mild and kind accord, with neighbours woe,
Doth cause them oft the crosse with patience take,
And forward still in hope and courage goe:
I were vngrate, if I should not indeuer
To nourish that (your grace). I honord euer.

The sonnet shared by his brother-in-law Robert Moyle and his sister Anne is replete with the accepted conceits of the time. Yet even as one reads the carefully mannered commonplaces -- the thwarting of worldly ambition, the misspent youth, the turning again to faith and friendship for comfort -- our knowledge of the actual facts of Lok's life enables us to find a kernel of truth within the shell of artifice. It is worth quoting in full:

If like the world a while I seeme to you,
Forgetfull and vnkinde for kindnesse showne,
Thinke it not strange their natures I ensue,
Where most I liue, whose prooffe is dearly knowne.
The world to me vnkind and carelesse growne,
Conuerts my nature to her temperature;
My youth (with loue of her puffed vp and blowne)
Is cause that I now iustly this endure:
Yet world's delights, nor cares nere alter'd sure,
So farre my minde, that I ingrate did proue:
Heauen's faith, Earths friendship, doth my soule inure
To take far greater pains where once I loue:
You then (by bloud and friendships holy vow)
Right deare take this, and for loues seale allow.

It is perhaps worth noting en passant that though Lok dedicated sonnets to many important people who were the recipients of dozens of salutary and flattering pieces, some of his correspondents were less well endowed with gratuitous poetry and may have been delighted with Lok's attention.

Amongst those who, so far as we know, had only Lok's work dedicated to them are Lord North, Sir Robert Bowes, Richard

Carew, Robert Moyle, and the Ladies Elizabeth Russell and Elizabeth Wooley, and Katherine Carey, as well as Mrs. Eleanor Bowes and Lady Cecil herself. Sir Francis Vere, that scion of a noble family and brave soldier, had only two dedicatory sonnets addressed to him, one of which was Lok's, the Countess of Warwick had three, Sir Henry Killigrew four.²⁸ Thus we see that while Lok followed contemporary fashion and eulogized the great and powerful these people were not the only subjects of his sonnets. Many of his literary bouquets were presented as tributes to patrons who had assisted him in the past and might in the future, or to personal and professional friends and acquaintances both inside and outside the Court.

Besides using familiar imagery, Lok shows himself to be a knowledgeable practitioner of the various rhetorical devices that both the reader and the writers of the time delighted in. We have lost interest in most of the more complicated figures which were then used as ornamentation, preferring technique to meld into the text and influence subliminally. Not so the educated Elizabethan reader. He (or she) knew and could recognize every figure from acyron to zeugma. Maurice Evans tells us that rhetoric, which in scholastic times had been studied in the schools as a technique for handling Latin, became with the Renaissance a

²⁸See Williams, Index of Dedications and Commendatory Verses.

method of training orators -- and by extension, readers and writers -- to deal with the vernacular.²⁹ Thus to the Elizabethan reader these devices had a role to play in demonstrating the craft of the writer as well as the new-found profundity of the English language. Peterson describes this interest in patterning as

... indicative of a period in the development of the vernacular when men of learning, enthusiastic over the degree of refinement to which it had been brought, admired the virtuoso performance.³⁰

One can also imagine that Lok was an interested reader of the many books of critical theory written during this period. Such contemporaries as Wilson, Gascoigne and Puttenham, as well as Sidney in his famed Defense of Poetry, had all dealt in both a logical and perceptive manner with the problems and pleasures of writing in the vernacular and had tried to systematize what was still a very fluid and insecure tongue. In his own use of all the latest types of "colouring" and embellishment Lok shows himself to be aware of the new importance of the English language and indeed, in his Dedicatory Sonnet to Lancelot Andrewes then Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral and chaplain to the Queen, he makes reference to the vernacular itself when he says:

²⁹M. Evans, p. 22.

³⁰D. L. Peterson, The English Lyric from Wyatt to Donne (Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 227.

I meant in English dittie only sing,
The tragike notes, of humane well away,
But waightie matter of so wise a king,
Compeld me yet a greater part to play.

The idea that theme and language must be in partnership was but another aspect of the all-important influence of decorum on the writers of the time. As we have seen, Lok was a master at tailoring subject matter and language to fit the person addressed. However, other and contradictory elements in his character, and especially the enthusiasm with which he embraced his role as gentleman-poet, sometimes caused him to scatter verbal embellishments with gay abandon with the result that his literary form sometimes verges dangerously close to poetic excess. Far and away his favourite device is alliteration, though he is in general careful, using perhaps two or at the most three syllables beginning with the same letter in each line, there are times when he indulges himself unduly. A typical example of this over-enthusiasm occurs in the sonnet to Sir John Stanhope:

But now adayes, men euery worke appeach,
As barren, borrow'd, base, or ouerbold.

Unfortunately it is Lok who is overbold. Rubel says that for Puttenham more than three syllables of like letter in a line constituted the vice of tautologia. It was of course one of the commonest errors in the writing of the time and

only Puttenham considered it a vice.³¹ The temptation to emulate Chaucer, and at the same time display one's growing English vocabulary, was not resisted by most writers, and probably positively enjoyed by most readers. Therefore, though at times Lok's use of rhetorical devices is clumsily executed and almost never inspired, they form an important adjunct to his knowledge of the nature of poetry and deserve at least a cursory glance. I intend to summarize his use of them, touch on one or two more imaginative examples, and look at a particularly dense sonnet in its entirety.

Apart from alliteration, antistrophe (the repetition of a word or phrase of a verse in succeeding stanzas) and traductio (the repeating of a word in different forms) are two of Lok's favourite figures and they are blended quite cleverly in the sonnet to the "Vertuous Lady the Lady D" whose identity is unknown though there is a strong hint in the subject matter that she is related to Lok in some way. There is also in this sonnet a conscious use of anaphora, or the repetition at the beginning of lines of the same word or words. The Elizabethan reader would note the various forms of the verb like, the play on kind, kindred, and kinsman, as well as the repetitive forms of the word

³¹ V. L. Rubel, Poetic Diction in the English Renaissance (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 290. All Renaissance rhetoric nomenclature is taken from Rubel's glossary, pp. 276-291.

kind itself. True and truth, contentment and content are also interchanged as examples of traductio..

If kinred be the neernesse of the blood,
Or likenesse of the mind in kind consent;
Or if it be like pronenesse vnto good,
Or mutuall liking by two parties ment:
If kindnesse be in truth a firme intent,
With open heart to testifie good-will;
If true good will, be to contentment bent,
If true contentment cannot be in ill;
I know you will repute this token still,
A pledge of kinsman's loue in ech degree;
Which though it do your treasure little fill,
Yet way to perfect wealth will let you see.
My selfe in kindnesse wish and hope in you,
Profit of mind, and soules content t'insue.

On the other hand, Lok's least used figure is oxymoron. However, when he does utilize it (again incidentally in conjunction with anaphora), it serves to encapsulate the character of Sir Robert Cecil who is pictured thus:

Your aged youth so waind from vaine delights,
Your growing iudgment farre beyond your yeares,
Your painefull daies, your many watchfull nights.

What better description of Lord Burghley's hunch-backed little man-child striving to fulfil the high expectations of his father.

Synathroesmus, or "the heaping figure", a combining of different matter all relating to the same idea, is used, together with alliteration, with an abandon dangerously close to excess in Lady Scrope's sonnet, the final lines of which offer her the poem:

Do worthie waight, whose eye vouchsafe incline,
To take in worth, reade, iudge of, and defend,
This worke, weake record of my hearts indend.

In his use of puns and wordplay Lok shows a painful constancy. One can almost hear his sigh of relief as he wrote to Sir John Popham, Lord Chief Justice, and penned the line, "Which makes you iustly chiefe of all the rest." Again, in his dedication to Sir Edmund Anderson, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, he is able to address him as "the common shield of guiltlesse wight."

I will end this brief discussion of Lok's use of rhetorical figures with a summation of the figures in one of the especially dense sonnets. Appropriately enough it is addressed to Fulke Greville, a central figure in the poetic courtly circle, whose epitaph was to read, "Servant to Queen Elizabeth, Counsellor to King James, and Friend to Sir Philip Sidney." His own works include the mandatory sonnet collection, some religious poetry, drama, and the well-known life of Sir Philip Sidney. With this talented gentleman Lok seems to feel free to explode as many rhetorical fireworks as he can pack into his sonnet. The subject of the piece, carefully interwoven with praise of Greville himself, is the sonnet which Lok is committing to his protection. The reader would note that he begins by combining anaphora with erotema, the questioner, and that there is an internal rhyme within the third line. (Perhaps here is the place also to note that, though in his religious sonnets Lok's verse style is incredibly convoluted and interlocked, in the Dedicatory sonnets he sticks to

the Spenserian model for all except the sonnet to Lady Wooley, which unaccountably runs abba cddc effe gg). The second quatrain contains hysteronproteron, or syntax out of normal order, in the words forced am. Lok also makes passing use of tapinosis or "the abaser," in referring to his poetry as "the thing." (These lines also contain a commonplace conceit of the time, that of the poet being forced to offer his work to the public despite his own modest misgivings). The third quatrain and final couplet contain synonymia in the use of divers and diversly, antistrophe in the repetition of the word prayse, and finally synonymia again in the use of praise and dispraise. All this, of course merely embellishes the content of the sonnet with its reference to the variety of readers and the variety of praise a writer might expect. The sonnet is addressed "To the Vertuous Gentleman Fulke Greuill Esquire":

Who can of learning treat, and you forget?
Who may of vertue talke, and you neglect?
Who would true fame, from your due praises let?
Who should not (knowing you) your loue affect?
I therefore forced am in this respect,
To offer publicly for you, to reed
This thing the which vncrau'd you would protect,
If (by malignor's blame) is stood in need:
In diuerse, diuersly this worke will breed
I know, an humour in the censurer's brain,
The wisest, on the best contents will feed,
The curious (for some scapes) count all but vaine:
But of the better sort true prayse must grow,
The prayse of some is meere disprayse I know.

Besides his carefully worked out rhetorical figures, Lok also made use of most of the common conceits of his time. Pastoral, the stage, harvest, banking, alchemical

and chess imagery all play their roles in elaborating a theme. Like as a journey, a lady's eyes compared to stars, and mutability also surface in one or other of the Dedicatory sonnets making of them a compendium of fashionable poetical virtues and vices. There is, however, one omission that, considering its popularity at the time, is worth mentioning. The conceit of the poet as "eternizer," the one who places the name of the subject into time never to be forgotten, does not appear in any of these Dedicatory sonnets. The only reference to this subject is found in a sonnet to Elizabeth which is part of Lok's dedication of the whole work to the Queen. The opening lines say:

My worthlesse pen Presumeth to devise,
To eternize Your peerles vertuous fame.

Perhaps, because of her position as head of state, Elizabeth was felt by Lok to be automatically eternized anyway, and he as a poet was merely a modest adjunct to the inevitable memorializing forces of history. His own views on the futility of personal eternization are boldly set out in Sonnet LVII in Christian Passions (Part 2), and though this theme too may be only another "turn" on the eternizing conceit, it is worth quoting in full as an example of Lok's attitude, and also as an inadvertent prophecy of his own deserts.

Who seeketh not with all his powre and might,
To eternize unto himselfe his state?
That chance or time may not his blisse rebate,
Or death it selfe may not dissolve it quight?

Thus some therefore for honour fiercely fight,
And some for wealth, do travell far and nigh,
Some worldly wisdom with great studie buy,
To make them famous seeme in vaine worlds sight;
Which is the readiest way they do espye,
To keep their name from death which so they hate,
Yea all suppose, posteritie the gate,
T'immortalize this flesh, whose floure must dye;
But all go wry, wealth, honor, wit have end,
And children passe, faith onely life doth lend.

As we shall see in his religious poetry, it is Lok's unshakable faith while undergoing a life rather too full of mishaps and misfortunes, which shines forth in his verse and makes both his existence and his poetry worth a second glance, and thus plays a major role in carving out Lok's own modest eternization.

Faith and Works

We till to sowe, we sow to reape,
We reape and grind it by and by;
We grinde to bake, we bake to eate,
We eate to live, we live to die
We die with Christ to rest in ioy
In Heaven made free from all annoy.

Humphrey Gifford,
A Posie of gilloflouers (1580)³²

Lok's religious works consist of the version of Ecclesiastes, several metrical versions of the Psalms, and over 300 sonnets. Whether Lok had written much secular poetry before 1593 is unknown. As we have noted, at least two of the Dedicatory sonnets suggest that he was, as he

³²Quoted by A. B. Grosart, Miscellanies of the Fuller Worthies' Library, III, 429. See the sonnets to Margaret, Lady Hoby and the Marchioness of Northampton.

says, "accustomed more on vainer theames to write." However, none has survived to inform us of either its style or content. The printed collection of his religious works, and especially the dates of their publication, tell us once more that Lok was quick to become attuned to the ideas current in his society.

The urge to turn to a less profane subject than earthly love in both prose and verse gathered momentum throughout the latter decade of the sixteenth century; it had its roots in a need deeply felt by both Catholic and Protestant Englishmen of the time for a more committed purpose in life. The Counter-Reformation had sanctioned once more the impulses of self-sacrifice and piety in the Catholic church in general, and in particular it had produced from the English Catholic College at Douay many zealous and dedicated men intent on bringing England back into the fold of the church. A Catholic translation of the New Testament had appeared in 1582, prepared by Roman Catholic exiles in Rheims. (The more famous and permanent Douay version would not be printed until 1609-10). English Protestants, especially those of the more precisianist stamp, were increasingly worried by what they saw as the growing secular and worldly nature of their society, a society whose devotional life, as Martz tells us, had been shattered by the upheavals and controversies accruing from the radical religious changes in the middle of the

century.³³ As a result of a dearth of suitable Protestant material, devout English members of the Reformed church often adapted the disciplined methods of prayer and meditation instituted by such Catholic mystics as Ignatius Loyola, Francis de Sales, and Teresa of Avila,³⁴ while Robert Southwell provided the example of a homegrown mystic and poet of unimpeachable piety despite a sadly misguided religious faith. Indeed Martz calls Southwell the first significant poet of a new kind of poetry which would blend religious meditation with the Elizabethan lyric.³⁵ The atmosphere, then, was ripe for the great outburst of alternative religious poetry which occurred towards the end of the century, in direct competition with the secular sonnet (sequences that were being busily penned, it seemed by every poet and poetaster in the kingdom.

Peterson credits Lok with being the first poet to publish in English sonnets dealing exclusively with Christian experience.³⁶ But Erskine mentions Henry Constable's Spiritual Sonnettes to the Honour of God and

³³L. L. Martz, p. 7.

³⁴Martz, p. 7, and see relevant chapters on meditative practices of the time.

³⁵Martz, p. 183.

³⁶Peterson, p. 268.

Hys Sayntes, published in 1591, as being in the vanguard of religious sonneteering.³⁷ The date of publication places Constable first by two years, but in effect it matters less which of these two men was first, than that their names are coupled as important originators of the new wave. For we remember that they were both agents in the Court of James VI and both members of the poetic circle which surrounded the King at the time. Perhaps, as a result of the theological discussions which were relentlessly part of the everyday life of this artistic coterie, a process of insemination took place which produced fruit in the form of both Constable's and Lok's religious poetry. It is also interesting to note that, though Constable was a Catholic and Lok a Protestant, they were united as Englishmen seeking to provide moral answers for present malaise.

In discussing Lok's Dedicatory sonnets we made passing and final reference to his translation of Ecclesiastes. In this consideration of his religious poetry one more brief digression is necessary before going on to the 300 holy sonnets which comprise the bulk of his work. For, also appended to the 1597 edition of Ecclesiastes, are Sundry Psalms of David Translated into verse, as briefly and significantly as the scope of the text will suffer; by the same author. Once more I do not intend to discuss the

³⁷J. Erskine, The Elizabethan Lyric: A Study (1903; rpt. New York: Gordian Press, 1967), p. 128.

literary value of these translations of the Psalms, but only to view them as part of another important trend of the time.

Holland, in his study of British Psalmists, surveys the long and honourable tradition of translating the Psalter into the vernacular which was commonplace in England even before the invention of the printing press.³⁸ He also points out that the Psalms, even in ancient Christian (i.e., Roman Catholic) Churches, were that part of the liturgy which was sung or recited by the whole congregation.³⁹ He mentions an early translation of the seven penitential Psalms made by Fisher, bishop of Rochester, in 1505 and says, "From this period, the history of the English Psalter becomes identified with that of translations of the Scripture into the vernacular language" Another aspect of Psalm translation mentioned by Holland is its function as "a pious and edifying recreation."⁴⁰ Thus two excellent reasons, that of continuing an ancient and holy tradition of translating the Psalter into "English dittie", and at the same time filling the hours with a moral pastime, perhaps influenced Henry Lok to turn to Psalmody as another

³⁸Holland, I, ii. See also the Introduction in general.

³⁹Holland, pp. 20-21.

⁴⁰Holland, p. 33. Fisher, of course is even better known as the partner in martyrdom with Sir Thomas More because of his refusal to accept the religious supremacy of Henry VIII; Holland, p. 41.

outlet for his importunate muse.

Other influences may also have been at work. As a child in exile with his mother in Geneva he may have joined his piping treble to the singing of the 1549 Sternhold-Hopkins version of the Psalter which Hallett Smith informs us was adopted by the English exiles into their service.⁴¹ Later, in England, Psalmody as that part of the English service greatly venerated by what Miss Smith calls "the more zealous wing of the reformed church," attained, she says, "an almost official status."⁴² So Lok was probably as familiar with versions of the Psalms in the vernacular as he was with other parts of his Bible.

Another and less homely influence which may have ignited his interest in the Psalms as a suitable subject for his poetry may well have been, once again, the atmosphere in the Court of James VI. D. H. Willson tells us that James rather fancied himself as David "as he rewrote the Psalms in doggerel English verse:"⁴³ A very potent religious influence may have been that of Sallust du Bartas who visited the Scottish Court and whose work was

⁴¹H. Smith, "English Metrical Psalms in the 16th Century and their Literary Significance," Huntington Library Quarterly, IX (1946), 264.

⁴²Smith, 264.

⁴³D. H. Willson, King James VI and I (Jonathan Cape Paperback, 1963), p. 63; Willson, p. 63.

translated by James. Du Bartas, as Willson reminds us, "represented a school of Christian poetry which had arisen in opposition to the secular and pagan literature of the Renaissance."⁴⁴ Another important Protestant influence in James's Court was Theodorè Beza, whose student, Peter Young, became one of the King's schoolmasters. (In the Epistle to the Christian Reader which precedes Ecclesiastes Lok mentions Beza, together with other pious translators of Holy Writ, as a person whose works might be compared and contrasted to his own so that his errors would be "couered or excused.") Beza in turn is linked to Marot, a valet to Francis I who became one of France's favourite poets in the mid-1530s when, with the help of Beza, he translated David's Psalms into metre. His holy purpose was somewhat thwarted, it seems, by the use his translations were put to. Holland paints a comic picture of the whole French Court singing these Psalms to the melodies of their own favourite secular songs, including the Queen who rendered "'Rebuke not in thine indignation' to the tune of a fashionable jig."⁴⁵ But this sort of religious frivolity found no home in James's Court or, we imagine, in Lok's mind. His own renditions of Psalms 27, 71, 119, 121 and 130 follow a meticulous measure designed rather to fulfil the aim of

⁴⁴Willson, p. 62.

⁴⁵Holland, I, 47.

memorization than to set the feet tapping.

As an example of Lok's style I have chosen the first four lines of his version of the 130th Psalm. I have then appended, for the purpose of comparison, several other representative versions of the same Psalm. Lok's De Profundis begins:

From pit of deepe perplexities to Thee for helpe I
cry,
O Lord giue eare vnto my plaint, and aide me speedily.
If strictly thou my sinnes behold; O Lord what flesh
is iust?
But mercy proper is to thee and therefore do we trust.

Here is another version of the same lines written by Francis Davison (1575?-1619?), a poet who published about a decade later than Lok:

From deepe gulphes of misfortune
Orewhelmed with miseries,
Lord, I thine aid importune
With neuer-ceasing cries.

Oh heare my lamentation,
Oh view my restles teares,
And to my supplication
Bow down attentiu eares.

My manifold abuses
If thou behold in ire
Lord, I haue no excuses
To 'scape eternall fire.⁴⁶

The main contrast between these two versions is, of course, provided by the metre. For despite Davison's lively stanzas, his vocabulary, notably in his use of "supplication"

⁴⁶Quoted in E. Farr's Select Poetry of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, Vol. 36, Part 2 (1845; rpt. Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), 326.

and "attentive," cleaves closer to the Genevan Biblical version while the greater number of feet in Lok's lines gives his rendition a more sonorous tone. This Psalm (and the others are much the same) is also typical of Lok's whole attitude towards the writing of religious verse. In particular it illustrates two important attributes of his divine works: his intelligent seeking for poetic decorum and his abundance of religious faith. A noteworthy example of the former in these four lines is the phrase "But mercy proper is to thee," where the word proper explicitly denotes mercy as a peculiarly divine prerogative and fuses poetic decorum and Christian hope in the idea of God's unstinting mercy. Lok's metrical versions of selected Psalms are also, unfortunately, typical examples of two less homogeneous strands in his character: his high poetic aspiration and his modest talent. For there is no doubt that in these Psalms he is striving to create more than those simple couplets suitable for rote memorization that were the objective of so many of his contemporaries - and even perhaps of two of his most famous predecessors. I am referring, of course to the progenitor of all popular metrical versions, the Sternhold-Hopkins translation, the number of whose editions between 1547 and 1621 pays tribute to its constant popularity over a long period of time. Here is the opening stanza of the 1575 edition:

Lord to thee I make my mone, when dangers me opresse;
I call, I sigh, plaine and groane, trusting to find
release.
Heare now O Lord my request, for it is full due time,
And let thine eares aye be prest unto this prayer
mine.⁴⁷

One wonders if it was the music rather than the words that endeared itself to the Marian exiles forbidden the pleasure of dancing but allowed to sing out heartily in the chapel. Then later, with its inclusion as an integral part of the post-Marian Elizabethan church service, be it Anglican or "Puritan," the version became institutionalized as acceptable to all Protestants. Certainly the Sternhold-Hopkins rendition is good honest versifying, but it is not the great poetry we would expect of such a beloved and long-lived favourite. A better example of the latter is the masterly translation of the penitential Psalms by Thomas Wyatt. These are his opening lines of Psalm 130:

From depth off sin and from a diepe dispaire,
From depth off deth, from depth off hertes sorow,
From this diepe Cave off darknes diepe repayre,
The have I cald, O lord, to be my borrow.⁴⁸

The above lines with their convoluted phrases and the variation on the word deep are obviously aimed at the reader of poetry rather than the memorizer or singer of Psalmody.

⁴⁷ Substantially the same as the text of earlier versions, this edition has been used because of its ready availability in University microfilm form.

⁴⁸ K. Muir, ed., Collected Poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1949), p. 223.

They are quite different from the simpler rhymings of Davison, Sternhold and Hopkins, and of course Lok. And yet another look at Lok's Psalm 130 shows that he too is caught up^a with the pattern of the words and he succeeds in creating another version of holy praise rather than merely reducing the Biblical words to easy rhyme. Perhaps Holland's description of it as "feeble"⁴⁹ is somewhat harsh. At the very least it can be seen as another example of Lok's reach exceeding his grasp.

Holland notes that to Michael Cosworth's versions of the Psalms in the Harleian collection at the British Museum there are prefixed complementary verses by "Richard Carey" and Henry Lok, each man styling himself "cousin" to Cosworth. Carey is of course Richard Carew the "especiall friend" addressed in Lok's Dedicatory sonnets, and Michael Cosworth the M. C. who prefixed a laudatory sonnet to Lok's own Sundry Sonnets of Christian Passions. Erskine, in commenting on earlier Tudor literary tributes, notes that they provide "first evidence of the intimate literary life that the Elizabethan poets were to lead."⁵⁰ It is pleasant to imagine that our subject, after a long and sometimes lonely stint devoted to agential duties, was able to relax and enjoy what he thought of as edifying conversation with courtly men of

⁴⁹Holland, I, 229.

⁵⁰Erskine, p. 79.

letters who shared tastes similar to his own. It is sad, however, to find posterity so unappreciative of his efforts: STC altogether ignores his Sundry Christian Sonnets (it should have a note before 2730 referring us to Lok at 16696, as it has one after 2729 referring us to William Hunnis at 13975), though its tripartite list of editions of English metrical versions of the Psalms is more than 330 entries long.

I now turn to the religious sonnets, Lok's main contribution to gnomic literature. Apart from the Dedicatory sonnet prefixed to James VI's Exercises at Vacant Houres, published in 1591, the first major printing of Lok's religious poetry occurred in 1593 when 200 sonnets, divided into two parts, were published by Richard Field in London. Each part is prefixed by a Preface and ends with a Conclusion, all in sonnet form, making 204 sonnets in all. The whole is somewhat fulsomely dedicated to the Queen. First there is the poem already quoted above at p. 177, then comes a word puzzle, a poem set in the form of a square in praise of Her Majesty. The latter is a rather quaint example of the sort of word play in which the Elizabethans delighted. After the royal dedication come the epistle "To the Christian Reader" in which Lok sets forth his reasons for writing, and the sonnets themselves. This then is the 1593 edition of Sundry Christian Passions.

In 1597 a second edition of Christian Passions,

"corrected and augmented", was appended to Ecclesiastes. A further 125 sonnets of a Feeling Conscience and Peculiar Prayers were added to this edition. Scanlon suggests that the changes made in the second edition of Christian Passions are the work of Lok himself, citing as evidence the enhanced literary quality imparted to a given sonnet by the change or addition of a word.⁵¹ While it is not possible to say with certainty that Lok rather than an anonymous printer's clerk was the author of the "improvements" in the 1597 edition, knowing both Lok's own careful use of words as demonstrated in his agential letters and his facility with and knowledge of the connotative value of language as shown in his pleading letters, one can imagine that the revision of these his first major poems to be published was a task he would undertake with industrious enthusiasm. Throughout the following discussion I have chosen to use the text of the 1597 edition.

Though Henry Lok is one of the least known of the many lesser versifiers of the times, and is almost never included in modern anthologies of Renaissance poetry, even a cursory reading of his sonnets makes one feel that they are familiar indeed. Maurice Evans has, I think, given the reason in his discussion of the poetry of the period:

⁵¹Scanlon, p. lxxv.

One thinks of Elizabethan verse in terms of sonnets and pastorals rather than in terms of the writers who produced them, for the similarities between the poems in the same category are greater than the differences; much of it has a curiously objective quality, as if it were written according to a recognized formula.⁵²

This observation, of course, applies as much to the religious poetry as it does to the secular. The preponderance of "sighs and tears," the echoes of "cries and groans," and the "conduits" of vice or virtue which permeate the poetry of the soul are mirror images of the "freezings and burnings" and "killing" eyes which decorate so much of the love poetry of the time. Thus we will not nor should we expect to find in Lok's religious poetry any new or outlandish conceits. There is (pace Scanlon) nothing of the metaphysical in his images. A more positive comment about his work might be that it provides us with an authentic primer, albeit one limited in scope, of many of the images and conceits of the Protestant imagination as it expresses itself in religious verse.

Let us begin then by investigating some of the themes and variations in the 200 sonnets of Christian Passions. In his epistle Lok warns "the Christian reader" not to look for any order in the sequence, saying:

To the cause of my so preposterous placing of them,
and division onely into three sorts, I confesse
indeed I am persuaded their disorder doth best fit

⁵² Evans, p. 81.

the nature of mankind, who commonly is delighted with contraries, and exercised with extremes; and also as they were by God ministred unto my mind to set downe by sundrie Accidents; so I suppose my providence could not (by a formall placing of them) so soone hit the affection of every reader, as Gods direction (by that which men call chance) might often do,

In the above exposition Lok introduces two themes very close to the Puritan vision. The first, the idea of a disordered world, is linked to original sin and the fall of the first parents. Walzer, in his discussion of Puritanism as an iconoclastic system bent on the destruction of the old secular and religious order, says that the Puritans felt that there was no harmonious universe and that, indeed the fall corrupted not only human nature but nature in general.⁵³

The second theme, that of God's direction, and especially its linkage to "chance", seems to suggest that Lok, like so many other Protestants of his time, may have sometimes used his Bible as a charm. Knappen describes this process when he discusses the central importance of the Bible in Protestant life:

Nothing was to be laid upon it, and in a moment of trial and perplexity he might divine with it, opening it at random and following the implied advice in the first passage his eye lighted on.⁵⁴

Certainly "God's direction" produces a somewhat disjointed order in Christian Passions with its clusters of sonnets on

⁵³M. Walzer, The Revolution of the Saints (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 160.

⁵⁴M. M. Knappen, Tudor Puritanism (1939; rpt. Phoenix Books, 1965), p. 365.

a theme emerging and re-emerging without any particular pattern. Thus the important theme of the consequence of the First Fall, though it appears in both sections of Christian Passions, and though it is indeed introduced in the first sonnet of the first sequence, loses much of its impetus because of a lack of systematic continuity in the sequence as a whole. Nevertheless, behind all the other motifs, there lurks the implicit suggestion that all troubles stem from the sin in the garden. Therefore it is worth pausing a moment to see how Lok deals with the subject.

In Sonnet I of the first sequence he refers to "The common guilt of Adams sinfull race," and suggests that this has been erased by Christ's sacrifice. In Sonnet IV he returns to the subject of inherited sin and links it to himself:

A lump of sin and shame I am I know,
Wounded so deepe with deadly poysoned dart
Of serpents sting, which did from parents grow.

The theme as such then merges with the background, but still remains implicitly present as the counterpoint to the many references to the necessity of grace for human salvation. It is referred to overtly only once more in Part I when, in Sonnet XXXVIII, the first quatrain states:

Borne blinde I was, through sinfull Adam's fall,
And neuer since could see with carnall eyes:
Ne know I where or how for helpe to call,
From out of sin to holie life to rise.

In the first sonnet of the second sequence of Christian Passions Lok bewails man's loss of reason,

(Which in first parents frankly did abound)
And better part of natures strength did marre;

and once again turns to Christ: "whose promises are just," as the source of all strength. Once more, as in the first part, the theme then becomes an adjunct to other motifs to re-emerge in Sonnet XLV when man's lack of wisdom is explained thus:

This error is the scarre of Adams wound,
Who sought his knowledge not in fountain cleare.

Finally, in Sonnet LIX, another turn on the theme produces a version of the Fortunate Fall. Because it is as good an example as any of Lok's style, and also because it is a typical summation of many of the arguments used at the time to justify God's allowing Satan to overcome His most perfect creation, man, it is worth quoting in full:

If Paradise were such a pleasant soyle,
Where all things flourish first and prosperd aye,
Wherein who liued, neuer could decaye,
Till sin by Satans slight gaue man the foyle;
Which blessings afterward did cleane recoyle,
And left man naked in reproach and shame,
To dust to turne againe from whence he came,
On baren earth to liue with sweat and toyle;
Then is our state much better then that same,
Our Paradise a place of blisse to staye;
Our Saviour (Abrams bosome) doth displaye,
Wherein our soules shall rest most free from blame,
Where he our name hath writ in booke of life,
To be exempt from feare of care, or strife.

Perhaps noteworthy is the use of parentheses in the eleventh line to point up emphasis rather than for apposition. The

thought thus becomes "Our Saviour ... doth displaye Abram's
bosome wherein our soules shall rest most free from blame."
The above sonnet also contains an example of a poetic idio-
syncrasy which, if not peculiar to Lok, is practised more by
him than by most of his contemporaries. He often has an
internal rhyme in the second last line of a sonnet. It
rhymes with the last word of the line preceding it and, to
point it up more clearly, the word after it is capitalized.
Lok does not indulge this habit in any of the Dedicatory
sonnets but it is particularly noticeable in both the
Christian Passions and the Feeling Conscience sonnets.

Despite Lok's epistolary disclaimer and a real lack of
pattern in Christian Passions, some kind of order, if only of
imagery and tone, can be found in these sonnets. For
example, in the first part, as befits work described as
devoted to the themes of "meditation, humiliation, and prayer,"
Lok is very much a lonely figure wandering in an Old Testament
landscape. This role of wanderer is augmented as Lok con-
stantly changes personae and in different guises of humility
seeks grace from a somewhat remote but finally merciful God.
In the second part of Christian Passions, those of "Comfort,
Joy and thanksgiving," Lok, though he still occasionally
personifies himself as a humble character in a parable, is
more often cast as Lok the "elect" Protestant and Renaissance
man who has dedicated his life and works to the service of
God. Let us see how these two major themes are illustrated.

In the first sequence of Christian Passions the subject of the prime necessity of faith is raised again and again. Often it is used as a sort of balm which saves Lok as he undergoes travail in his role of the weary traveller. Linked to grace it is indeed the talisman of Lok's spiritual odyssey, the reason he is able to go on despite many stumblings. Thus, in Sonnet XI Lok, in his persona of David fighting Goliath, is provided with "the shield of faith" as protection against the "power of flesh and world." In Sonnet XVIII, where he is the "poore Samaritan" waiting at the well, faith becomes "the fountain where all blisse is plast." In Sonnet XX he is the son of Agar, "a bond man unto sin as fleshly race," and faith is linked to grace as the means by which he will be released from bondage. In Sonnet XXIV he is the adopted child of God and faith the purifier which will enable him to remain within the church. The child theme is continued in Sonnet XXVII when he becomes a "pined chyld" weaned too soon by a "churlish stepdame" and left "languishing in sin." Here grace enables him to "pray in faith." In Sonnet XXXVI he is a body possessed by evil spirits and asks God to let "puissant faith" take the place of sin. In Sonnet LVIII he is a bird with "wearied wings" and faith shows him the "Church inuisible" as a place of repose. Sonnet LXX links faith to wandering thus:

Whilst in this worldly wilderness about,
For want of faith I backe am forst to go,

and ends with the well-known Old Testament image of the

brazen serpent (Num. 21, 8; 9), which is linked to its New Testament counterpart as a type of Christ:

That brasen Serpent Christ nayld on the tree,
Whose sight by faith alone is cure to mee.

Finally, in Sonnet LXXXI which uses the familiar allegorical picture of the soul floating in a sea of troubles -- though in this case it is "a streame of lusts" -- faith is "a ship of safetie." Again Lok combines an Old Testament image of safety, the ark, with its New Testament type or counterpart, the Resurrection of the Saviour (1 Peter 3: 20-21). There are many other instances both of the lonely figure motif and of the incidence of faith and grace as partners in salvation; the above, with its sequential numerology is, I think, sufficient evidence of the Old Testament atmosphere found in the first part of Christian Passions. Owen Watkins in his study of Puritanism also discusses the influence of the Bible on Puritan life and suggests that the narratives of the Old Testament were extensively adapted to parallel incidents in everyday experience. He notes that, because the Bible showed all types, all could find parallels.⁵⁵ There are numerous other examples, besides the two quoted above, of Lok's careful typological reading of the Bible in the first part of Christian Passions and there is no doubt that, like so many of his contemporaries, he saw the Old Testament as a mirror-image of the New and the New as relevant to his own daily

⁵⁵O. C. Watkins, The Puritan Experience (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), pp. 210-211.

experience. In particular, knowing what we do of his life-long journeying, the identification with lonely and outcast figures in the Old Testament must have been very close indeed.

Before discussing the major theme of Part Two of Christian Passions we must mention another continuing theme in the first part of this sequence. The "stream of lusts" mentioned above is just one illustration of a constant repetition of the word lust. Again and again lust, "unbridled," "in a rage," or redundantly described as "sinfull," "fleshly," and "sensuale" appears as part of the darker side of a sonnet. Indeed, at times it seems that the only sin is carnal desire. But, while this dwelling on the subject of fleshly weakness may have provided a small dart of holy frisson for Lok's precisian readers, it also (I think) plays a role in establishing a point of tension between the two parts of Christian Passions. As we shall see, in Part II of the sequence Lok produces a group of sonnets with a platonic theme strongly reminiscent of Spenser's Powre Hymns. It is quite likely then that the emphasis on lust in Part I is meant to balance its antithesis, platonic love, in Part II. Lok's method is not as subtle as Spenser's. There is not the careful delineation of the difference between profane and divine love found in, for instance, An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie. Rather, Lok uses a similar idea in a less polished manner. Thus, just as Spenser contrasts the "mad fit", as he calls earthly love, with its heavenly counterpart, so Lok uses the

second part of Christian Passions to reaffirm his desire to write holy verse.⁵⁶ Just as Spenser repeatedly describes earthly love in the strongest and most reprehensible terms as "greedy vaine desire," or "fleshy slyme," so that he can contrast it to the "eternall fount of love and grace" that is "celestial love," so Lok hammers away at the theme of lust in Part I the better to contrast it to the Platonic love theme in Part II. The method may be clumsy but there is the same intellectual and literary objective. As the insistent and easily quotable lust motif is less interesting than the Platonic theme I will not pursue it further. I will, however, return to the Platonic sonnets in my discussion of Part II of Christian Passions. Meanwhile I will note other affinities between Lok's sonnets and Spenser's Powre Hymns which suggest that, though the latter were not published until 1596, Lok may have read them in manuscript form. Another obvious influence in the second part of Christian Passions is Sidney and examples of this will be noted when they occur.

A main theme of the second part of Christian Passions is, as I have mentioned before, Lok's reiteration of his desire to devote his talent to the service of God. This subject permeates the whole sequence and helps to change its tone. Thus, though Lok is often still wandering, and still

⁵⁶ All excerpts from Spenser taken from Spenser: Poetical Works, ed. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (Oxford University Press, 1970).

subject to sudden setbacks, basically he assumes the persona of a man of his time confident in the power of saving grace and in the personal salvation promised him by God through the intercession of Christ. This optimism is registered in Sonnet I, whose final quatrain and closing couplet states:

But since my eyes of grace a sight have found,
Of that eternall light which doth incline,
Fro' out these fogs of feare I hope t'vntwine,
And force of fainting faith for to confound,
And on a ground More firme will build my trust,
And that in Christ whose promises are iust.

Armed with this confidence Lok, despite reverses which are dealt with intermittently in succeeding sonnets, is able to make his theme of the writer as poet and prophet the main strain of his renewed song. At the same time, though there are echoes of Spenser's platonic ideal in these poems, and though Lok's aim is of course to praise God not Woman, the method used is most reminiscent of Sidney's treatment of the subject of poetry in Astrophil.

He begins modestly in Sonnet III by suggesting that he is "an instrument unfit to witnesse forth thy glory any more," then he picks up an image from the first part of Christian Passions, that of the Parable of the Talents. But, whereas in Part I, in Sonnet LXXXVII the "abuse" of an undefined talent becomes one more symbol of the abject state of Lok the outcast traveller, in Part II, in Sonnet IV, the talent is shown as having been fortified by saving grace, recognized and put to appropriately agential use. The first quatrain announces the theme:

Since to so holy use I consecrate
The silly talent Lord thou leyst to me,
That it a trumpe unto thy praise might be,
And wisse of their woe that thou doest hate.

In Sonnet VII Lok picks up a familiar conceit from the secular school, that of the inability of the poet to express himself:

Where shall I finde fit words of proper phrase,
Where with to wisse all the loue I owe?

which reminds one of Sonnet I of Astrophil and "I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe."⁵⁷ In Sonnet VIII he continues the theme and likens his strivings to dedicate his talent to God to that of an eagle in flight:

Sometimes with Eagles flight aloft I tower,
And seeme to see the glorie of thy sunne,

which is reminiscent of Spenser's

And like the native brood of Eagles kynd,
On that bright Sunne of glorie fixe thine eyes, ...

(An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie, 138-39).

The final three lines of this sonnet, replete with internal rhymes and rhetorical flourishes, state:

But ere I haue begune my worke is donne,
So farre I runne In seeking to begin,
I cannot write, such maze my muse is in.

This is very like Sidney even to the play on the word maze which in Sonnet XCVI of Astrophil becomes "a mazefull solitarinesse." It also reminds one of the theme of Sonnet XXI in Astrophil where Sidney says,

⁵⁷ All excerpts from Sidney taken from The Poems of Sir Philip Sidney, ed. W. A. Ringler, Jr. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

That mine own writings like bad servants show
My wits, quicke in vaine thoughts, in vertue lame.

But of course write Lok does and in Sonnet XI he affirms "I will thee laud each season, time and place." In Sonnet XII another familiar Renaissance image, that of the looking glass, is utilized to demonstrate his holy task:

But I will show thy mercies in a glas,
That by my words men may acknowledge thee;

and once more his lines are akin to those in An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie,

And shew himself in th' image of his grace,
As in a looking glasse, through which he may
Be seene, of all his creatures vile and base, ... (114-16).

In Sonnet XV the talent motif resurfaces again as he gives the world "these silly frutes, which grow on feeling hart," a theme that would be taken up by Milton some forty years later in Sonnet VII. Sonnet XVI has a proselytizing tinge to it as the poet uses his art "That so I might encourage many more." Sonnet XVII uses a nativity theme and the poet comes to offer his gifts with the knowledge that "mean works" will be accepted "as much as those which more excell." The second quatrain of Sonnet XXII picks up the theme of poetic fecundity:

My heart, my mouth, my pen they neuer stay
To take occasion freshly to renue,
The memorie of praises to thee due,
Lest natures weaknesse let them passe away.

Sonnet XXIII continues the idea as he suggests that his "wandering eye" will use every object before its sight as

"matter" so that "tong nor pen should neuer idle lye." Sonnet XXIV seeks to fulfil that promise but, in a variation on the theme of Sonnet VIII, the poet finds himself once more unable to write and again figures his condition as that of one caught in a maze:

Whilst I do studie fitly to begin,
To vtter forth some part of my intent,
Which to thy praise with zeale And loue is bent,
For freeing me from due reward of sin,
I finde a laberinth that I am in,
Of many merits which do me inclose.

These moments of exhilaration and despair are, of course, reminiscent of the lover's progress in any secular sonnet sequence. Indeed Lok uses the convention quite openly, even ending this particular sequence about his experience of being impeded in true paradoxical sonnet style: in Sonnet XXVI, though the muse-maze-labyrinth motif is continued, the inhibitions have miraculously faded away:

How can I limit well my tong or pen,
Within what bownds may I my selfe inclose,
Who such a theame to write vpon haue chose,
Whereon the more I muse, more growth it then,
It fares with me herein, euen right as when
A hastie mind forgetteth what to speake,
When stammering words the perfect sence do breake,
And makes vs not be vnderstood of men.

In Sonnet XXVIII he reiterates his proselytizing aim as he promises

To follow forth thy praise (but new begunne)
Till all thy people may thy mercies heare;

and, after reminding the reader that it is through "gifts of grace" that "faith and comfort grow," he repeats the talents

theme in the final couplet:

Where through we know That we are thy elect,
And these our feeble fruites wilt not relect.

Lok returns to the idea of poetry as holy work in Sonnet XXXVII, the first line of which recalls Sidney's "O my thought my thoughts surcease," and the first quatrain Lok's own life-story:

Avaunt base thoughts, incoember me no more,
By laying forth these earthly wants of mine,
As though thou wouldst perswade me to repine,
Because of wealth I haue not needlesse store.

After rejecting earthly needs Lok enumerates the spiritual riches he has gained from his Saviour and reiterates in the final couplet:

These gifts me binde To praise his holy name,
And place chief wealth in knowledge of the same.

Sonnet XL again bemoans his inability to praise God; he is "wanting power" and adds,

Mans wit in words comes short in this behoue,
To recompence (nay onely to confesse)
The many waies thou doest our bodies blesse.

Here too one is reminded of Sonnet XXXV in Astrophil and of Sidney's inability to praise Stella adequately:

What may words say, or what may words not say,
Where truth it selfe must speake like flatterie?

However, the closing couplet of this sonnet, while reemphasizing his want of talent, is saved from a paradoxical resolution by the introduction of hope in the form of an implicit suggestion of the gift of tongues:

Thy trustie doue, Thy holy spright of grace,
Makes yet our weaknesse stand before thy face.

This ability merely to sketch in an image and leave its connotation for the reader to find within the context of the poem is very typical of Lok. For example, Scanlon notes that, in Sonnet II of Christian Passions Part I, if the second line, "I in whale remains devoured of sin," is omitted, the fact that the poet has assumed the role of Jonah would be lost on the average reader.⁵⁸

The theme of the poet as divine singer continues to reassert itself no matter how many detours Lok may take as he makes his way through the hundred-odd sonnets in the second part of Christian Passions. It is much more closely connected than the wandering motif in Part I and imposes its form upon the sequence. It reappears again in Sonnet LIII when his talent is compared to the "borrowed light" of the stars:

These silly sparkes of light which in vs dwell,
Do shew thy grace which vs this motion sent.
Although therefore no speech or tong can tell,
How infinite thy glorie ought to bee,
(Which passeth humane sence by high degree,
As wisest men to grant, they do compell)
Yet thou lik'st well, We show herein our will,
Which I haue vowd vnto thy seruice still.

Again we note ideas akin to those in the Powre Hymnes but this time they come from the secular ones. The "silly sparkes of light" are like Spenser's "Some sparkes remaining of that heauenly fyre" (An Hymne in Honour of Love, 107), while the

⁵⁸Scanlon, p. xliv.

line "Which passeth human sence by high degree" is a less powerful rendition of "... rob both sence and reason blynd" (An Hymne in Honour of Beautie, 77).

In Sonnet LXXVI Lok's "feeble powres" are shown as being used to praise God, in contrast to the "pregnant speech" of others which more often is used to abuse and deceive. Sonnet LXXVII is a particularly good example of Lok's style and tone and, as it unites several strands already utilized to express the divine poet's theme (for example, the need for eloquence, and the inability of the poet to soar high enough to do justice to his holy matter), as well as another covert reference to the gift of tongues, it is worth quoting in full:

For common matter common speech may serue,
But for this theame both wit and words do want,
For he that heauen and earth and all did plant,
The frutes of all he iustly doth deserue;
No maruell then though oft my pen do swarue,
In middle of the matter I intend,
Since oft so high, my thoughts seeke to ascend,
As want of wisdom makes my will to starue;
But thou O Lord who cleuen tongs didst send,
Unto thy seruants, when their skills were scant,
And such a zeale vnto thy praise that brant,
As made them fearelesse speake, and neuer bend,
Vnto the end, One lot from thy behest,
Shall guide my stile, as fits thy glory best.

In Sonnet XCII Lok promises "To publish forth thy praises day and night," and rededicates "The remnant of my life" to this purpose. In Sonnet XCIII, which begins,

If I did hope by pen to patterne out
The many merits of thy Maiestie,

Lok the preacher again suggests that his aim is to "point

fourth others to a thought I crave," and he ends, "And wish my will might others likewise warne." In Sonnet XCIV where Lok the divine singer appears for the final time in Christian Passions, the first quatrain states:

What tongue or pen can shew it selfe vnkind,
Vnto a father full of mercy so,
Who freely doth such benefits besto,
And of our case hath such a carefull mind?

These then are the two major themes of Lok's Christian Passions sonnets. In the first part the linkage of faith and grace to a wandering or outcast figure, in the second part the poet as holy singer dedicating his talent to God and trusting that in its fruition there is lively evidence of his election.

There are other themes too, but before moving on to discuss them, perhaps this is the place for me to pause and summarize some of the ideas Scanlon has derived from his study of these same verses.

In his introduction to Christian Passions Scanlon takes the opportunity to use Lok's vision of himself as a divine poet to survey the history of the poet as priest and prophet within the Christian experience. He then connects Lok to the medieval view of the religious poet as "a bardic and sacerdotal figure."⁵⁹ Next he suggests that a shift in attitude in man's relationship to God, from the communal to

⁵⁹ Scanlon, p. x.

the individual, occurred as a result of the Reformation. Pursuing this theme into a discussion of the central importance of the Bible to this new sixteenth-century breed of divine poets, Scanlon associates Lok's Biblical themes with Baldwin, Barnes, Byrd, Crowley, Davies of Hereford, Dod, Drayton, Fenner, Greville, John Hall, Hopkins, Hume, Hunnis, Middleton, Segar, Sternhold, Surrey, and Wyatt.⁶⁰ He also notes Lok's "Calvinist religious sensibility" and how his individual relationship to God through the Bible manifests itself in his poetry.⁶¹ Because in his discussion he provides a text of the sonnets for his readers, Scanlon is able to delineate more comprehensively the various forms of typological examples found in Lok's Christian Passions and to discuss in detail Lok's postfigurative stances. Scanlon links Lok's identification of himself with various Old and New Testament figures to a discussion of the correlative process and suggests that Lok's view of himself as the injured traveller, and of Christ as the Good Samaritan, are types that find repetition in Lok's own spiritual life.⁶² We could add that they are also linked very closely to Lok's secular life where, even if the samaritan efforts of his friends fail, Christ's sacrifice remains ever to comfort Lok the weary traveller. Finally,

⁶⁰ Scanlon, p. xxix.

⁶¹ Scanlon, p. xxx.

⁶² Scanlon, p. xxxvii.

Scanlon notes that, while Barnes, Davies of Hereford, and William Byrd, all Lok's contemporaries, identify themselves at different times with a specific Biblical image, none of them seeks such complete identification with so large a number of Old and New Testament figures as Lok does.⁶³ While this may well denote a lively imagination on Lok's part, and I think it does, I also recognize that there was a certain magpie-like quality in his character which was unable to resist any glittering bauble with which to decorate his somewhat untidy nest of poetry.

An aspect of Lok's work which places him firmly within the Calvinist mode is his treatment of the figure of Christ. Martz, in his discussion of the small part Christ's humanity plays in English Puritan meditation, tells us that He is more often seen as a redeemer and mediator than as a man, babe, or sufferer.⁶⁴ And indeed Lok's references to Christ are almost a paraphrase of this comment. There is one Nativity Sonnet (XVIII in Christian Passions Part II) where even the opening lines refer to the Holy Child as "Saviour,"

From far I see the stars which guide the way,
From East to West, to finde my sauiour out,
while the body of the sonnet concentrates on the "shining truth" of the star and the wanderings of the traveller.

⁶³Scanlon, p. 11v.

⁶⁴Martz, p. 163.

When at last he reaches the object of his search the only humanity evident in the Babe is His "blessed face" and then the emphasis of the sonnet shifts once more to the seeker. Spenser does something similar in the Hymne of Heavenly Love where, after the introductory lines "first where he encradled was," the poet's descriptive eye sidles away along the appurtenances of the stable (lines 225-28). A later treatment of the same subject, Milton's On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, proves how persistently the image of Christ as Redeemer rather than as a fellow human being imprinted itself on the Puritan imagination. Though the child-Jesus is the central figure of the work he is merely recalled to the reader's notice by a naming process: "Infant God," "Heaven born child," "Prince of Light," and at last as "The Babe" (though even here He is quickly attached to the "bitter cross") while Milton's poetic fancy concentrates on detailing the state of the world transformed by His birth.⁶⁵ Lok's image of Christ in Christian Passions Part II is part of this tradition, so different from the sacramental one in which the protection of the Child from the ills that beset infancy is tenderly attended to.⁶⁶ Lok's

⁶⁵See John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. M. Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957), p. 42.

⁶⁶Cf. Crashaw's famous Hymn of the Nativity, in which an almost maternal imagination worries about the unsuitable features of "this starry stranger ['s]" accommodation, "A cold and not too cleanly manger," and the unhygienic element in Angels' wings, "Your down so warm will passe for pure?" Complete Poetry of Richard Crashaw, ed. G. W. Williams (New York: N. Y. University Press, 1972), p. 70.

sonnets in this section, therefore, abound with descriptions of Christ as Saviour or High Priest, or He is the allegorical figure of Phoebus, or His humanity is veiled behind such phrases as "the piercing light of truth," and only rarely is He seen as the Son of Man.

But what does Lok not attempt? And what images does he not utilize in some form or other to justify his holy task? The answer must be, little and few indeed. Common figures from secular poetry embellish both sections of Christian Passions but more especially the second part where, as the soul saved from eternal damnation and buoyed up by Saving Grace, Lok seems to feel it more proper to introduce secular conceits into his holy verse. Thus, though in Part I there are also plays on the word sun in reference to Christ, and though the Magdalene and seas of tears make a Crashaw-anticipating appearance, it is in Part II that the flood gates are opened and familiar "colours" met with in many a love sonnet sequence run into the scene. Contraries, platonic themes, Christ's "dazeling eyes," reference to "Elizian fields" and to Orpheus, are all grist for Lok's mill as he grinds out sonnet after sonnet reiterating his belief in his own salvation, and pointing the way for others.

As I have noted before, one must also imagine Lok as a constant and diligent reader of the poetry and prose of his time, and especially of the writings of others in the courtly circle. Indeed at times it would seem that these

readings, besides those of the Bible, may also have served as sources of inspiration for his imagination. There are clusters of poems on similar subjects which appear and disappear within the general and continuing theme of each part of Christian Passions. I have noted a harping on the word lust in Part I, with its sense of wallowing in the sins of the flesh. Its opposite but complementary theme in Part II is found in a group of sonnets on the subject of Platonic love. The tone and some of the language in these particular sonnets suggest that the influence of Spenser may have been at work. Scanlon remarks on "Spenserian influence in Lok's work, most notably in his use of Latin sentence structure, enjambement, and alliteration. While giving instances of Lok's rather ambiguous syntax as a result of his love of the Latin style, Scanlon also notes that Lok makes "extensive" use of the run-on line and that his alliteration is even more frequent than in Spenser.⁶⁷ In reference to the latter point I think that once again we are witnessing that excessive use by Lok of favourite poetical devices which I have noted in remarking upon his perilous use of alliteration in the Dedicatory Sonnets.

However, there is no doubt that the Spenserian influence in Lok's work is very strong and a particularly close link, indeed a direct emulation, is Lok's use of the word brickle in his Feeling Conscience sonnets. This particular

⁶⁷Scanlon, pp. lxvii-lxx.

rusticity was used by Spenser in The Ruins of Time, published in 1591. And then there is the platonic theme in Christian Passions, Part II. Of course we cannot prove that Lok was inspired to write about a higher form of love because he had read Spenser's efforts. Perhaps once more it is the result of coincidence and the common experience of the versifiers of the time. Whatever the case, the following brief sampler should indicate the tone of the particularly Spenserian sonnets in Christian Passions, Part II. In Sonnet XXXI the octave proclaims:

Who so beholds with constant fixed eye,
The fauour and perfection of my choyce,
He cannot chuse but must in heart reioyce,
That mortall sight may heauenly blisse espie,
All earthly beautie he will straight defie,
As thing too base to occupie his braine,
Whose fading pleasures so are payd with paine,
That they true tast of pleasure do denie.

The opening lines of Sonnet XXXII combine the platonic motif with a common "eye" conceit:

O heauenly beautie of loue the fountaine true,
Whose shining beames do penetrate my soule,

while Sonnet XXXIII does a turn on common conceits found in so many sonnet sequences of the time. Starting in the second quatrain, Lok asks

If white and red be borrowd from the Rose,
If bright and shining to the sunne compar'd,
If high and straight and goodlinesse w'award,
And beautie haue such base descriptions chose,
Then let the wise this beautie true regard,
Where all perfections in one subject be

The third quatrain and final couplet of Sonnet XXXIV continues

both the platonic theme and the evocation of Spenser:

This earthly forme of flesh it is so small
Of worth to charme the sence of noble spright,
As is a starre before faire Phoebus bright,
Whose glory doth their borrowed beauti' apall,
Thus wise men fall, Whom carnall eies do guide,
Whose iudgement may not vertues sight abide.

Sonnet XXXV is an apostrophe to Heavenly love which begins,

O Heauenly loue, with God thou dwelst for aye,
Thou passest faith and hope in dignitie,

and in the third quatrain states:

Thou doest with God aloft in heauens sit,
With God in counsell thou art alwaies by,

which is reminiscent of An Hymne of Heavenly Love and

Whom he therefore with equall honour crownd.

With him he rained, before all time prescribed,
In endlesse glorie and immortall might.

(35-37).

Sonnet XXXVI uses the Phoebus conceit and repeats the theme
that it is Christ's beauty that attracts souls:

But so my senses do his beautie allure,
To gaze vpon his louely fauour bright,
That therein onely haue I may delight,
Where is all happinesse, I do assure,
He doth procure A plentiful increase,
Vnto my soule, of perfect love and peace.

The motif continues intermittently with a reference in Sonnet
XXXVIII to a promise that he, the poet, would "Thy darling
be," an evocation of Sapience, and a sort of mirror image of
her position as the "dearling of the Deity" in An Hymne of
Heavenly Beautie (184). Sonnet XXXIX repeats,

My eyes no beautie but in thee shall see,
And thy regard my wandering will shall tame,
Yea I will blame, And scorne each other thing,
Save what shall me vnto thy fauour bring.

Sonnet XLI, which begins by apostrophising Christ as "O Perfect Sunne," contains a reference to the four elements which is very close to Spenser's lines in An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie. Lok says:

The fire, ayre, water, earth they wholly bend,
The host of heauen, and creatures belowe,
To pay their dutie vnto thee they owe.

Spenser says:

Ayre more then water, fire much more then ayre,
And heauen then fire appeares more pure and fayre.

(An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie, 48-49).

In Sonnet XLIII Lok introduces a "Chain of Being" image:

The Sunne and Moone by day and night which shine,
The changing flouds, the firme and frutefull land,
The Planets which do firme and euer stand,
All which gainst thy behest dare not repine:
The host of Angels in thy heauenly band,
Th' infernall fiends with Lucifer which fell,
The fish, the foule, the beast agreeing well,
And all obedient to thy heauenly hand.

Again this is reminiscent of Spenser's own vision of the Chain of Being and its position in reference to the Sapience/Christ figure:

Both heauen and earth obey vnto her will,
And all the creatures which they both containe
For of her fulnesse which the world doth fill,
They all partake, and do in state remaine,
As their great Maker did at first ordaine,
Through obseruation of her high beheast,
By which they first were made, and still increast

(An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie, 197-203).

As there is a rare astronomical reference in Sonnet XLIII, it is worth noting that Lok derived no artistic stimulus from the New Learning. Radical scientific ideas are

noticeably absent from these sonnets and not even the marvelous discoveries of world geography so beloved of his uncle, Michael Locke, ever appear to turn a conceit for love of God. On the contrary, line seven of the above sonnet informs us that the planets "firme for ever stand." For Lok the universe was still whole and he did not (like Donne) see it as rent into "eight and forty shires."

After Sonnet XLIII the platonic theme begins to dwindle away. Snatches of it are recalled when a phrase here and there evokes the atmosphere. There is a reference to "my lovely heavenly choyce" in Sonnet XLVIII, and to "My lovely Sauour" in Sonnet LII. The final extended reference occurs in Sonnet LVI when Lok describes,

The throne triumphant where our Sauour sits
In Maiestie aloft, as best him fits,
A Iudge and Sauour to his Saints to be,
Coequall with his father in degree,

which again recalls Spenser's "the god of Loue, high heauens king" and the words from An Hymne of Heavenly Love which state:

Whom he therefore with equall honour crownd.

With him he raignd, before all time prescribed,
In endlesse glorie and immortall might,

(35-37)

Though it is still possible to trace references to the platonic theme in some of the following sonnets, it gradually merges with the background as other motifs arise, and the Bible as the primary source of inspiration takes over once

more. My main reason for dwelling on this particular aspect of Lok's work is not only to demonstrate what appears to be a strong Spenserian influence, but to show how close Lok came at times to obtaining lasting achievement. Perhaps his major fault is the prolixity with which he indulges himself in his poetry, in contrast to the brevity of his professional letters. But here too he is merely demonstrating that he is very much a creature of his time: in love with the English language and its possibilities. We must not forget that Samuel Daniel, a poet with more ability than Lok, was also afflicted with many of the same faults, ending his final sonnet in Delia with the somewhat superfluous statement, "I say no more, I feare I said too much."⁶⁸

Nevertheless the question remains, when noting likenesses to other poets in Lok's work, who read whom first in manuscript? Or were some conceits so much the common coin of versifying that the chances of contemporaries' copying one another, especially in an age when to copy was not considered either reprehensible or plagiaristic, extraordinarily great? We note that Lok's religious sonnets include the following near-misses. The octave from Sonnet XXX, Christian Passions, Part II, is analogous to Jaques' "All the world's a stage" soliloquy:

⁶⁸ See S. Lee, Elizabethan Sonnets (1903; rpt. New York: Cooper Square Pub. Inc., 1964), II, 135.

This stately stage wherein we players stande,
To represent the part to vs assignde,
Was built by God, that he might pleasure finde,
In beautie of the works of his owne hand,
All creatures of the ayre, the sea and land,
Are players at his appointment of some thing,
Which to the world a proper vse may bring,
And may not breake assigned boundes or band."

Sonnet III in Sundry Affectionate Sonets of a feeling Conscience has a Renaissance reference to sleep which was mandatory even before Daniel enshrined it as "Care Charmer sleep" in Sonnet 49 of his Delia sequence (printed in 1592).

Lok says:

Fro out what dreams, what sleepe, what charmed rest
kouse I my selfe? who too too long haue stayd.

Scanlon carefully annotates many more phrases and themes that link Lok to less famous contemporaries and near contemporaries.⁶⁹ When the first edition of Christian Passions was published in 1593 Lok, though he felt that agential duties would fill much of his time in the near future, was still hopeful that deserved reward would soon be forthcoming. The final sonnet, the "Conclusion" of Christian Passions, Part II, indicates his feelings about his writing and his profession, and his attitude to worldly success. It is also a last evocation of Astrophil both in its alliterative use of w and partially in its content. One remembers Sidney's Sonnet XXXIV and the opening quatrain,

⁶⁹For individual instances see Scanlon, pp. 114-183.

Come let me write, 'And to what end?' To ease
A burthned hart, 'How can words ease, which are
The glasses of thy dayly vexing care?'
Oft cruell fights well pictured forth do please.

Also, from the same sonnet, "Thus write I while I doubt to
write, and wreake my harmes on Ink's poore lousse." The open-
ing line of Sonnet XXXV from Astrophil is remembered too,
"What may words say, or what may words not say," Because it
could well stand as a talisman to sustain Lok during the
years of disappointment that would follow I quote the "Con-
clusion" sonnet of Christian Passions, Part II in full:

Words may well want, both inke and paper faile,
Wits may grow dull, and will may weary grow,
And worlds affaires may make my pen more flow,
But yet my heart and courage shall not quaille,
Though cares and troubles do my peace assaile,
And drue me to delay thy prayse awhile,
Yet all the world shall not from thoughts exile,
Thy mercies Lord by which my plaints preuaile,
And though the world with face should gratefull smile,
And me her pedlern packe of pleasures show,
No heartie loue on her I would bestow,
Because I know she seekes me to beguile,
Ne will defile My happie peace of mind,
For all the solace I in earth may find.

Unfortunately, as we know, the "pedlers packe of pleasures"
was not offered by a grateful nation and Lok was not required
to withstand that particular temptation.

To turn from Lok's sonnets of Christian Passions to
his Sundry Sonnets of a feeling-Conscience is to move from the
personal to the social, from the exemplary to the didactic.
Of course Lok points a moral for the reader in the Christian
Passions sequences; indeed, as we have seen, he seldom loses
an opportunity to do so. Neither is there any lack of familiar

figures and conceits in the Feeling Conscience series. On the contrary, all the old favourites reappear at some time or other; Lok also announces in the prefatory poem that these sonnets are a renewal of his "vowed song." Rather it is that there is a subtle change of emphasis in this sequence. Lok's muse eschews the higher flights of fancy. There is, for example, only one instance of the use of Greek myth to amplify a point: the figure of Hydra in Sonnet VI. Christ, while still a champion, is less evident than God the Father chastizing the faithful as proof of His love for them. Biblical themes reappear more consistently; the parables of the talents and of the seed, and the sufferings of Job; while the ancient Jews are used either as examples of felicity or, by their ultimate fate, to signal a dreadful warning to Christians who neglect their duty. Stern moral lessons are not leavened with idealizations of Christ as Phoebus or careful expositions on the theme of platonic love. Domestic images, an increased use of proverbs and more homely language, for instance such words as brickle, nozzle, and huddblind, all give these sonnets a more directly personal touch. It is as if the poet's purpose is to tutor and comfort the less sophisticated brethren in the chapel rather than to dazzle other courtly or divine poets. So, while it is possible to treat the Feeling Conscience sequence in the same manner as the Christian Passions sonnets, I have chosen in this final discussion of Lok's poetry to emphasize the theme of Lok's

communing with his spiritual brothers. Therefore I will limit myself to a series of sonnets where Lok in his role of lay preacher uses his talents to stress that faith that does not show its effects in works is not enough. "Being fruitful in every good work," as Paul reminded the Colossians (1: 6), was for Lok a telling mark of the true believer.

Before I turn directly to the sonnets, once more a word is necessary about the rhyme scheme used. Scanlon notes the influence of the Spenserian rhyme scheme upon Lok's work. In Christian Passions Part I it is used exclusively, though in Part II Lok tends to use an "embracing scheme."⁷⁰ I have already noted that the Spenserian scheme, with one exception, is that of the Dedicatory Sonnets. However, a survey of the Feeling Conscience sonnets suggests that Lok's rhyme scheme may not have had much significance in itself. The sonnets reveal themselves to be an incredible mélange of rhyme schemes without any discernible order. Most follow an abba cddc deed aa pattern, but variations include final couplet rhymings of ff, bb, and ee, and third quatrains of dbbd, eccc, and daad. It would seem that Lok's choice of the Spenserian model was mere coincidence and, though in his subject matter he may have followed the ideas and conceits common to his time, his form is basically rhyme without reason as he moves from one scheme to another as it suits his fancy.

⁷⁰ Scanlon, pp. lxxvii, lxxi.

But to return to Sonets of a feeling Conscience and Lok the lay-preacher. The Puritans' stress on the omnipotence of God, and their belief in grace as the sole means of a salvation they knew to be preordained, caused some precisians to neglect their duties to humanity. Lok brings this weakness to their attention. In Sonnet IV he asks,

What is thy measure full? dost thou suppose
Of strength, or perfectnesse, or plenteous store,
Of frutes of faith profest; that now no more
Thou carest, albeit thy tree true beautie lose?

while the final lines point the lesson:

Words are but leaues; works fruits that should be there,
Shew that thou liu'st, by charitie therefore;
True holinesse doth teach a righteous lore,
Whereby to neighbour's good our thoughts we reare;
Vaine is our knowledge and our holy shewes,
If in our life the fruite of loue not growes.

The need for charity, specifically in the form of love for one's neighbour, is stressed again in Sonnet XI, whose closing couplet asks:

For how can they th' inuisible God loue well,
Who they neglect their neighbors, neer that dwell?

Sonnet XVIII suggests that in offering a sacrifice to God the penitent is losing his labour unless he is first reconciled to his neighbour:

For how should I that grace to gaine deuise,
Which from my neighbour's sutes I haue exild?
At Temple dore my offering stayes behind,
Henceforth therefore, till malice leaue my mind.

Sonnet XLIV suggests again that prayer alone is not the way to heavenly bliss:

There is great ods we see and must confesse,
Betwixt the speaker's and the doer's faith,
Words well, but deeds much better man bewraith,
And both conioyned, do dutie best expresse.

Sonnet XLV continues the theme of practical love of one's neighbour:

Have we not cause to blush full oft for shame,
To see how we neglect our neighbour's need?

Then with a covert reference to Christ as both the Good Samaritan and the creature in distress (a typical instance of Lok's Spenser-like ability to link contraries to produce paradox), he points a potent moral:

When yet our Sauour seemeth to respect,
The silly Oxe which in the ditch doth lye,
Whose aide a stranger ought not to neglect,
If (but by chance) he saw it passing by;
But if our brother readie were to dye,
(For very want necessities to feed)
We let Him sterue, and take of him no heed,
Yea (though he craue) we stick not to deny,
As though it vs sufficed, to beare the name
Of Christians, yet in life deny the same.

Later in the sequence, after many sonnets in which other motifs have intervened, Lok returns once more to a favourite admonition. In Sonnet LXX the octave states the theme:

Good words are praised, but deeds are much more rare;
One shadow is, the other substance right,
Of Christian faith (which God and man delight)
Without which fruits our barren tree is bare;
Once well done, is more comfort to the soule,
More profit to the world, to God more prayse,
Then many learned words which sinne controule,
Or all lip-labour that vaine glorie sayes.

In Sonnet LXXXVII the theme appears for the last time:

To speake of faith, which forth no fruites can draw,
To feed with greedinesse the bodie's maw,
And yet no spirituall strength to let appeare,
Is signe the soule is dead, in thee or mee:
For liuing trees, by kindly fruit we see.

Thus, by using the continuing image of the tree as a symbol of charity with its implicit link to the Biblical admonition, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7: 20), Lok draws the attention of his readers to the need for good works, and especially for charity towards one's neighbour.

Yet, always careful to fulfil the letter as well as the spirit of the Calvinist creed, Lok devotes Sonnet LXXXVIII to a discussion of the need for actions to be properly motivated if they are to receive honour in the sight of God. He tells his readers,

The deed which meriteth (for vertue) prayse,
Must be premeditate in will before,
Indeuour'd lawfully, and which bewrayes,
No priuat object or respect we bore;
And God himselfe things iudgeth euer more,
Not be effects, as men of wisdoms blind,
But by intentions faithfull, honest kind,
Of such as doing them his side implore: ...

This gentle reminder balances carefully the awful paradox of the omnipotence of God with the need for good works as evidence of the redeemed life. It is here that Lok the precisian dealing head on with the relationship between faith confronted with predestined salvation or damnation, and works as socially meritorious, joins Lok the political animal, as worried as any of his contemporaries by the decline in private charity. Knappen discusses this problem, which became particularly noticeable as the sixteenth century wore on. He suggests two reasons for a change in attitude towards individual responsibility for aiding the poor. One was the

acceptance of the idea of inequality of wealth which resulted in a bare minimum of charity; the other the fact that the Reformation itself meant a general decline in that organized charity that had characterized the medieval Church.⁷¹ During Lok's time incipient modern capitalism as well as rudimentary state welfare were still struggling to justify their existence in a society undergoing basic change. As Knappen says, "The teaching on usury is second only to the role of the poor as a touchstone for sixteenth and seventeenth century social theory."⁷² Many years before these poems were written Lok's godly step-father Dering had been charged with preaching against the poor law and advocating a community of goods. This Dering had denied; nevertheless he quoted in his defence St. Matthew, Chapter 25, "I was hungry and ye gave me meat."⁷³ Walzer, in his discussion of the revolutionary and iconoclastic nature of Puritanism, notes that the two features of secular control Puritans wanted were the limitation of usury and the repression of beggary.⁷⁴ Lok, as we see, was much caught up in the paradox and contradiction inherent in

⁷¹Knappen, Tudor Puritanism, pp. 413-14. The problem is studied fully in W. K. Jordan's Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660: A study of the changing pattern of English Social Aspirations (London: Allen and Unwin, 1959).

⁷²Knappen, p. 417.

⁷³Knappen, pp. 408-409.

⁷⁴M. Walzer, p. 227.

Puritanism's basically conservative social theory which was in opposition to the radical monetary philosophy of many of its professors. His stress in this group of sonnets is of course on private assistance rather than state aid. However, as so often during his life, he expresses an attitude that reflects a particular concern of his time.

In his discussion of the Puritan ideal for individual piety, Knappen suggests that the power to communicate spiritual matters to others ranked high among Puritan objectives.⁷⁵

In this sense Lok's Feeling Conscience sonnets achieve their own small fame. In them he shows a talent for casuistry that must have brought comfort to many a member of the Elect whose problems of conscience led to the feelings of despair and helplessness that were so common within the Calvinist circle. His stern reminders that "who toucheth pitch shall therewith be defiled" (Sonnet XXVI), counterpoint statements of faith designed to uplift the spirits,

Who seeketh ayde his frailties to withstand,
He may be sure he shall not deadly fall;
Who but for grace, to God doth truly call,
He shall find comfort doubtlesse out of hand

(Sonnet XXX)

and are then correlated by a reminder that,

⁷⁵Knappen, p. 397; see also Chapter XXI as a whole.

A world of lusts attend vs to the graue,
And Sathan lyes in waite to leade vs wide
From heauen, whereto true wisdoms wils vs bend;
Thinke then if man haue need watch to the end

(Sonnet XLVII).

Yet finally there is a special protection for the faithful and a promise of an equality after death which will transcend and avenge any earthly suffering:

Heauen's kingdom former pride forthwith deuours,
It equals all estates, sects, skills, and powres,
And makes the bodie well vnite remaine,
Whereof the head is Christ, the members we,
And held coneiours of heauen with Him we be

(Sonnet LXXIII).

This then is the general outline of the Feeling Conscience sonnets: patterned reminders of God's just anger and awful power alternated with sonnets giving remedial advice and hope for eternal salvation.

The final twenty sonnets, which in numeration continue on after the hundredth sonnet of Feeling Conscience, are called Peculiar Prayers. Each is designated as a plea for particular help in need, for example, For Constancie, For true feare, For Patience, and many of the other virtues and blessings the devout Renaissance Christian required from his God. Here too prayers are also provided in case of dereliction of duty: for instance, Against defection, Not to trust in flesh, Sorrow for coldnesse of compassion. In total these Peculiar Prayers form a final bulwark to protect the timid or sickly soul in its fight against the world, the flesh and the devil.

Perhaps in the final analysis we should concentrate less on the pure bulk and uncertain quality of Henry Lok's poetry and instead think of the pleasure it undoubtedly gave not only to a morally-inclined reading public as always somewhat undiscerning in its taste, but to Lok himself. The careful working out of figure and conceit, the tailoring of an idea to the sonnet form, the searching for the correct English word to express a thought must have provided him with a serviceable pastime which made the long journeys in jolting carriages or cramped cargo boats less irksome, and the return to Court with a new batch of verses to share with his friends doubly rewarding. One might also note that Lok's life and Lok's poetry are complementary. Without his sonnets to sing of his faith and hope his life would be just another record of failure. Without the small successes and grinding disappointments revealed by his life-story many of the autobiographical points in his poetry would be dismissed (as indeed they have been) as typical turns on popular conceits. It is true the poetry has not lasted except as a footnote to the more established poets of this particular genre, but the ideas have.

But what of the opinion of the University Wits and in particular the so easily quotable lines from the Second Part of The Return from Parnassus about letting Lok's works "lie in some old nooke amongst old bootes and shoes," (inexplicably and ironically attributed by Edwin Haviland Miller to

their butt himself)⁷⁶ which have dogged and belittled Lok's reputation down the centuries? First we must take into account the various feuds and the in-fighting, whose cause was less a love of poetry than the political, religious, or private grudges which the University Wits were well known for bearing. Secondly, within the context of the play itself, a scene in which Iudicio and Ingenioso are "censuring" well-known poets of the day, the lines have a somewhat less derogatory connotation. These two, after eulogizing Spenser (greatly admired by the Wits) as "our Homer," go on to discuss Constable, Daniel, Lodge, Watson, and Sir John Davies. Each is accorded praise or dispraise or both. However, though the comments are often valid, the motive in making them is less to offer constructive criticism than to turn a witty phrase. For instance, the lines praising Davies's "hidden charmes" and "playner verse" end:

Martiall and hee may sitt vpon one bench,
Either wrote well and either lou'd his wench.

Leishman, taking the comment seriously, adds a footnote to the effect that he has "discovered no other evidence that this was one of Davies's characteristics."⁷⁷ Then Lok and Hudson are put forward for comment and the well-known lines

⁷⁶Miller, p. 8.

⁷⁷J. B. Leishman, Pilgrimage to Parnassus (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1949), I, ii, p. 240, n. 258.

are delivered by Iudicio and immediately capped by Ingenioso, with the punning rejoinder "Why then clap a Locke on their feete, and turne them to commons."⁷⁸ One wonders if Lok's name's vulnerability to punsters was not too great a temptation to resist and the main reason for this particular reference. It is here that one should recall that John Lyly, the leading Wit, wrote a short salutatory poem to Henry Lok in the 1597 edition of Ecclesiastes. This surely plays some role in counterbalancing the theatrical fireworks of the second Parnassus play. But Lok, perhaps because of his peripheral place in the Renaissance poetic scene, and certainly because of the long and somewhat repetitious nature of his sonnet sequences, has been unfairly served by critics of the period. Despite Miss Scott I think we can say that his "Dedicatory Sonnets contain interesting views of important people of his time and are neither more nor less inflated with flattery than others written by greater contemporary poets."⁷⁹ Despite Holland I think we can observe that Lok was striving for more than simple rhyming couplets when he wrote his metrical versions of the Psalms.⁸⁰ I would be the first to admit that many of Lok's divine poems are somewhat turgid, but all are illuminated by genuine Christian feeling and a

⁷⁸Leishman, Return from Parnassus, p. 241.

⁷⁹Cf. p. 146.

⁸⁰Cf. p. 146.

few, though outshone by the best divine poetry of the sixteenth century, can still cast a small clear light of their own. In his time he was read and read widely, the Parnassus play provides evidence of this if nothing else. His talent was minor, but his enthusiasm for his life on earth and his faith and hope in the life to come were boundless. A man who could be clapped into jail for debt one week and, three weeks later, after having been released through Cecil's good offices, be found wining and dining, and possibly winning over to Elizabeth's side a wealthy and important Scottish laird,⁸¹ did not lead a life devoid of incident or interest. A man who could write poems so full of hope and confidence in his God while experiencing what was to his mind Job-like suffering has more than ordinary merit. In summation, and to use two of Lok's favourite analogies, which in this particular case I think he would consider both apt and decorous, he was the servant who though given but two talents was "faithful over a few things" (Matt. 25: 23); and in his religious poetry the seed he spread did not fall upon "stony places" but brought forth fruit even if only thirty fold (Matt. 25, 14: 30). (The sentence may be read as a parody of Lok's own eclectic style; it should not be taken to deride it). Finally let us once more allow Lok to state his own case. In the pastoral poem which he like almost everyone

⁸¹HMC Salisbury Papers, XII, 185.

else around him attempted, he tells the "Gentlemen Courtiers in General";

Reject me not, (Ye Peares of gentle spright)
Because I do appeare in plaine array;
Sometimes for change, the curious do delight
In mean attyres, and homely food we say.

I find this mannered plea a convincing refutation of the contemptuous repartee of the University Wits and would suggest that Henry Lok has earned his modest place as the man who kept in common currency ideas that would be minted anew and more permanently by other and more talented poets. We do not ask more of him; he has not given us less.

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APPENDIX

List of Recipients of Dedicatory Sonnets

The following are given in alphabetical order, first men and then women, each with the title he or she held at the time of publication of Lok's sonnets.

Anderson, Sir Edmund

Andrewes, Lancelot, Bishop of Winchester

Bertie, Peregrine, XIII Lord Willoughby de Eresby

Blount, Charles, XIII Lord Mountjoy

Bowes, Robert

Brooke, William, X Lord Cobham

Burgh, Thomas, V Lord Burgh

Carew, Richard

Carey, George, II Lord Hunsdon

Cecil, Sir Robert, Principal Secretary to the Queen

Cecil, William, Lord Burghley, Lord High Treasurer

Clifford, George, III earl of Cumberland

Devereux, Robert, II earl of Essex

Dyer, Sir Edward

Egerton, Sir Thomas, Lord Keeper

Fortescue, Sir John, Chancellor of the Exchequer

Greville, Fulke

Howard, Charles, II Lord Howard of Effingham

Killigrew, Sir Henry
Knollys, Sir William
Mathew, Tobie, Archbishop of York
Moyle, Robert and Anne
Norris, Sir John
North, Sir Roger, II Lord North
Percy, Henry, XIII earl of Northumberland
Periam, Sir William
Popham, Sir John, Lord Chief Justice
Raleigh, Sir Walter, Lord Warden of the Stannaries
Radcliffe, Robert, V earl of Sussex
Russell, Sir William
Sackville, Thomas, Lord Buckhurst
Stanhope, Sir John, Treasurer of the Chamber
Talbot, Gilbert, VII earl of Shrewsbury
de Vere, Edward, XVII earl of Oxford
de Vere, Sir Francis
Whitgift, John, Archbishop of Canterbury
Wriothesley, Henry, III earl of Southampton
La Zouche, Edward, XI Lord La Zouche

Women

Bowes, Mrs. Eleanor
Brydges, Elizabeth
Cecil, Elizabeth (née Brooke) Lady
Cumberland, Margaret (née Russell) countess of

Lady D (unidentifiable)

Derby, Elizabeth (née de Vere) countess of

Essex, Frances (née Walsingham) countess of

Hunsdon, Elizabeth (née Spencer) Lady

Leighton, Cecilia (née Knollys) Lady

Pembroke, Mary (née Sidney) countess of

Russell, Elizabeth and Anne

Scrope, Ursula (née Clifton) Lady

Southwell, Elizabeth (née Howard) Lady

Hoby, Margaret (née Carey) Lady

Northampton, Helena (née Snakenborg) marchioness of

Woolley, Elizabeth (née Egerton) Lady

Warwick, Anne (née Russell) countess of

Miscellaneous

To the Gentlemen Courtiers in Generall

To all other his Honourable and beloved friends in Generall

To the Honorable [sic] Ladies and Gentlewomen attendants in
the Court.